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August 1984



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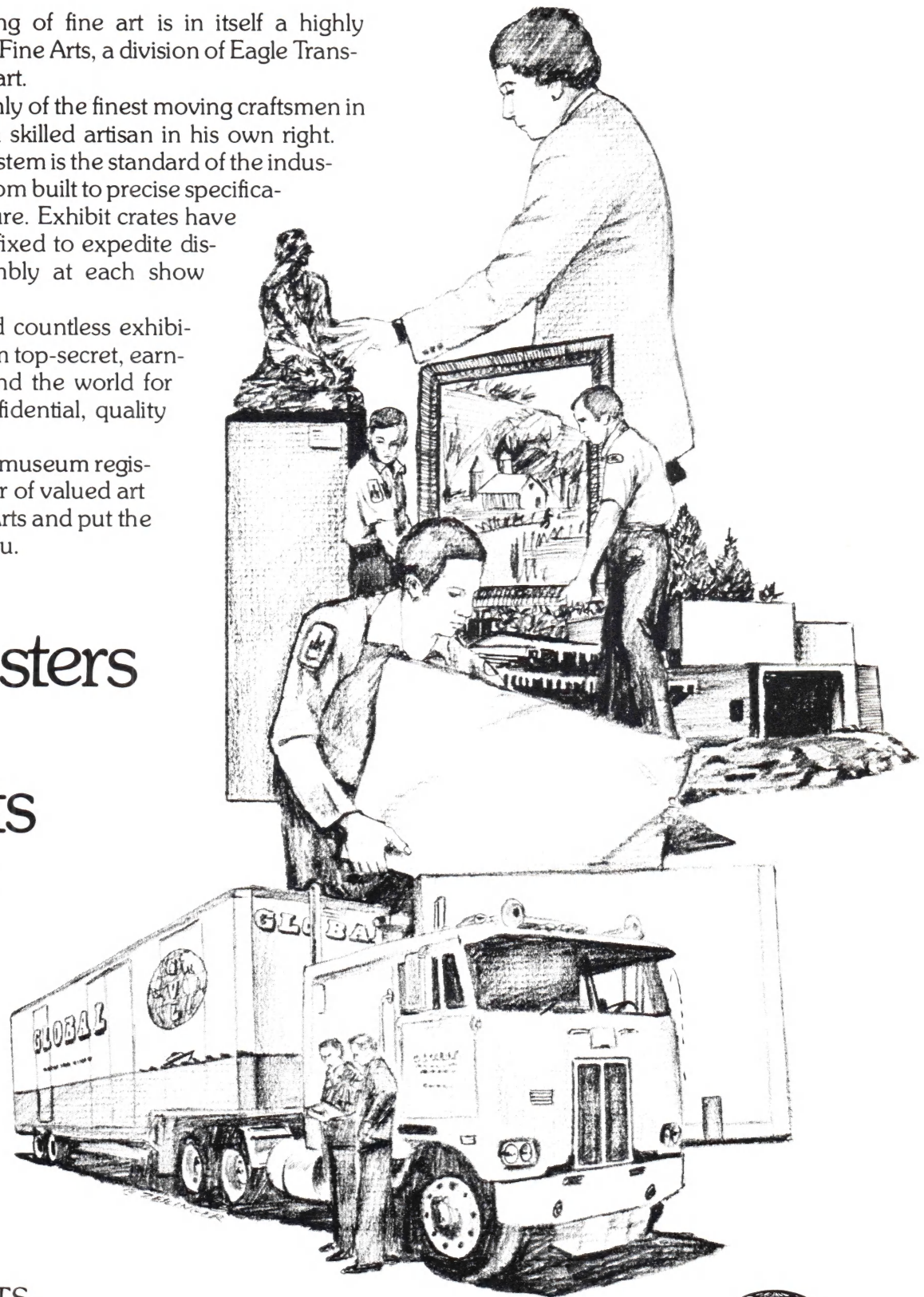
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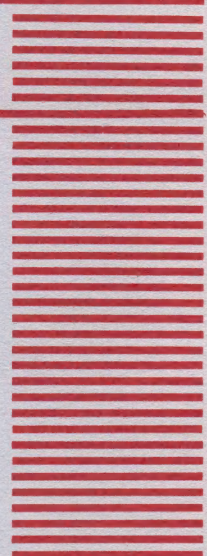
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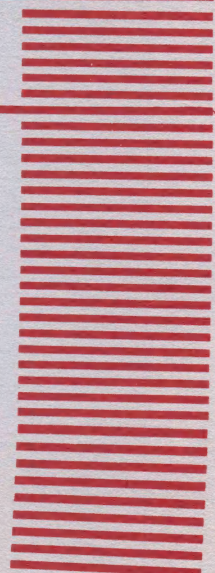
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August 1984

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COVER

Museums open up to the future. The report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century will be published next month. In recognition of this landmark event, this issue of MUSEUM NEWS is devoted to the work of the commission and features the first chapter of its report, *Museums for a New Century*, along with other explorations of the future. See the articles beginning on page 18.

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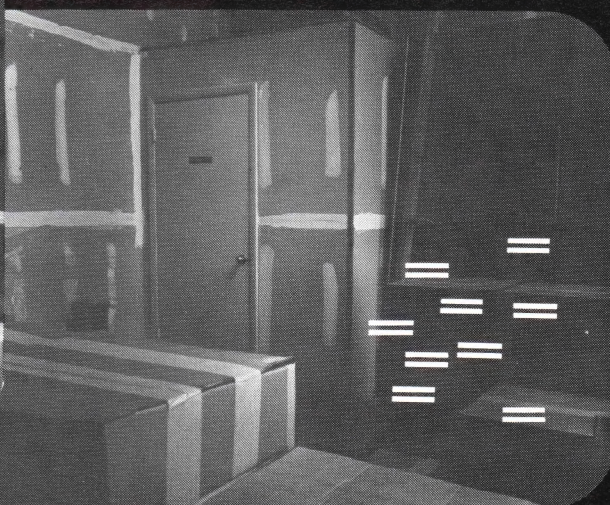
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Concurrent with the publication of this issue of MUSEUM NEWS, the report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century will be released. I believe that the report will have a profound effect on the future of museums. It is gratifying to see this project that we have been working on for more than two years come to so impressive an end. It is important to note, however, that while the commission has officially completed its work, its real effects are yet to be realized. The commission report, *Museums for a New Century*, is not the end of this AAM effort. It should instead mark the beginning of a resurgence of interest and activity on behalf of museums across the country.

When the commission was first proposed by Craig Black during his term as president of the association, we thought it would be the profession's vehicle for identifying specific future trends and determining how the museum community could best respond and prepare itself. In the process of the commission's work, however, we accomplished something far more important to our future as a profession. The commission has identified four future trends with implications for museums, but it also presents us with a clearly articulated statement of the fundamental functions of the museum and the essential public service that museums collectively provide society.

To the best of my knowledge, the Commission on Museums for a New Century is the first time museum leaders representing all types and sizes of institutions have carried on a sustained, far-reaching discussion and study of their shared responsibilities and tasks. During commission meetings it was remarkable to listen to conversations about collecting, for instance, in which people from different disciplines sought to identify the elements of the process that united those who preserve endangered species of plants and animals and those who collect and exhibit paintings. For many years the AAM has advocated the notion of a community of museums, and we have stressed the commonalities that underlie all museums. This argument has been instrumental in making the case for support of museums by the private and public sectors, especially at the federal level. What we learned during the commission process is that our emphasis on the community of museums is not only a useful political tool. There is, as the commission report so convincingly states, real truth to the claim.

In addition to providing us a context in which to operate as we enter a new century, the commission presents the profession, community leaders, government and other museum supporters with several challenges for the future. At the AAM we are beginning to plan activities that will help to implement some of the commission's ideas and recommendations. We are already working with Congress and relevant federal agencies to assist museums in caring for their collections and making them accessible. In addition, we are examining the possibility of a national colloquium on museums and the schools and assessing the feasibility of a research program to gather data about American museums.

Through the efforts of museum professionals and public and private sector leaders throughout the country, the report should generate initiatives on behalf of museums everywhere. It is essential that all people who work in and care about America's museums read the report and use it to advance the goals and objectives of museums both individually and collectively. We all have the opportunity to expand the discussion about museums, their importance to society and their meaning to human life. The future is promising.

The entire profession owes a great debt of gratitude to the commission and especially its cochairmen, Joel N. Bloom, director of the Franklin Institute Science Museum, and Earl A. Powell III, director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. More than any other single individual, Ellen Cochran Hicks as staff director has supplied the vision that synthesized the many ideas and recommendations that grew out of the commission's work. Ellen together with Mary Ellen Munley, researcher; Ann Hofstra Grogg, editor; Carolee Belkin Walker, research assistant; and her predecessor, Sally Jordalen, provided excellent staff support for all stages of the commission project.

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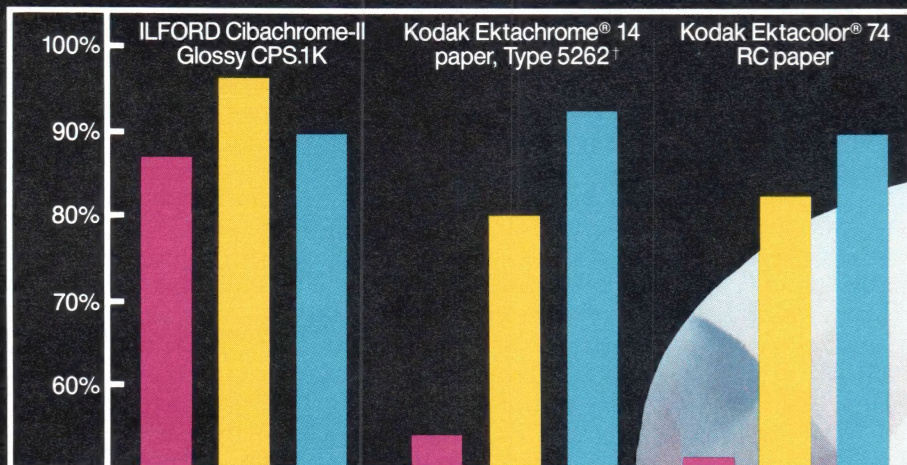


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The Future of Museum Registration

RICHARD PORTER



The imminent publication of the report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century has given us all reason to ponder the future not only of America's museums but of our respective disciplines as well. The comments on museum registration that follow are based on personal observation and many conversations with colleagues over the past several years. To those who have contributed ideas for this essay, whether wittingly or by chance, I am grateful.

During the 15 years since the appearance of *The Belmont Report*, the American Association of Museums' first in-depth study of America's museums,¹ museum registrars have made a good deal of progress toward entering the coming century as recognized professionals with complex responsibilities. *The Belmont Report*, published in 1969, said very little about registrars specifically, although its recurrent themes of low salaries, lack of professionalism and overwhelming work loads applied to them as well as other museum professionals. The comparisons of staff salaries revealed that registrars were paid less than their curatorial colleagues.

Many of the professionwide concerns expressed in 1969 are still with us. Museums remain overburdened, under-supported and unable to compete with the business sector in securing specialized personnel. Registrars' salaries and prestige remain less than those of curators and other administrators;

changes are being made, however, that may ultimately put the registrar on a professional par with others in the field.

The duties of museum registrars became much more complex during the 1970s. With improved support from government agencies, foundations and corporations, many museums increased their exhibition programs, and the larger institutions initiated so-called blockbusters. As their museums' risk managers, shipping coordinators, art handling supervisors and information specialists, registrars of large museums found themselves faced with enormous responsibilities.

In smaller museums, registrars became the legal watchdogs called upon to know the complex legislation governing the import and export of objects ranging from fine arts to egret feathers and human remains. Laws governing the donation of gifts and the museum's role regarding their monetary valuation became increasingly intricate. Potential violators have been very closely watched by the Internal Revenue Service since art prices began to soar in the 1970s and continued to escalate into the 1980s. Such legal responsibilities have

led to the establishment of frequent seminars on museums and the law, most often attended by registrars.

A development that will have far-reaching effects into the coming century is the entrance of museums into the technological age, with diverse applications of computers for inventory control, information systems, educational purposes, office support and membership files. *The Belmont Report* stressed the need for museums to adopt computer technology, especially the futuristic vision of a museum computer network, but it made no mention of registrars, the traditional keepers of manual information systems and the logical supervisors of new, automated systems.

Although the computer linking of museum data bases envisioned in the late 1960s has yet to appear, and may not do so until well into the next century, the application of computer technology to museum records is now so firmly established that it may be universal by the year 2000. The development has most directly affected the registrar, who is often faced with becoming a well-versed consumer and user — if not a full-fledged computer scientist — almost overnight. Anyone choosing to enter the field of museum registration as we progress toward the new century had best know about automated information systems as well as the hardware and software upon which they depend.

In short, we are approaching the time when only qualified professionals can accede to registration positions in large and middle-sized museums. And the small museum that hires a file clerk or a liberal arts graduate without additional training may face serious problems.

RICHARD PORTER is registrar at the Museum of Art, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania.

COMMENTARY

To date, registrars have kept abreast of new responsibilities and the need for more specialized knowledge through seminars, night courses and exchange with colleagues at professional conferences. Exchange with colleagues has been expedited by the Registrars Committee, a standing professional committee of the American Association of Museums established in 1976, and its regional affiliates. It is imperative that more formal means be found to educate museum registrars. One hope for this may be the many museum studies programs that have arisen in response to the need for training in other museum specialties. At present, in spite of its enormous importance, registration is not emphasized in any of these curriculums. One reason may be that many directors, curators and educators remain unaware that registrars are indeed pro-

fessionals in need of specialized training. The idea persists that registrars are clerical functionaries, people who were not bright enough to make it as curators and thus had to settle for something less. Learning on the job is considered sufficient preparation for such paraprofessionals. Their degrees are usually in art history, archeology, anthropology or one of the social sciences or liberal arts, but registrars are expected to be capable in such diverse areas as conservation, law, administration, business and accounting procedures and computer science. Ironically, registrars have in recent years adapted so well to their new and more complex functions that their image as dilettantes may have been intensified rather than decreased.

A second reason why so little professional training exists is related to the first. People aspiring to careers in museum work want to be curators, directors or museum educators — in other words, the “professionals” in the museum world. They also know that as registrars they will be paid less than curators in most museums. Greater progress must be made to correct these

problems of image and status. If registrars are to carry their burden into the 21st century, more must be done to ensure that the job is accorded the professional stature and compensation it deserves.

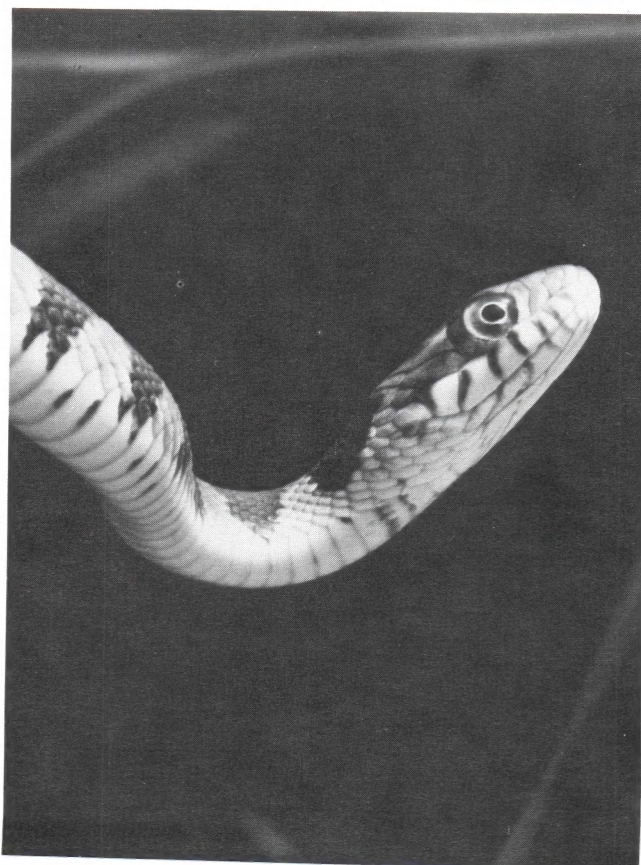
Anonymity is the lot of most registrars. Unknown to the public, they seem less important than the curators and directors who receive press and television coverage. No matter how much knowledge, skill and hard work an exhibition may require on the part of the registrar, credit for its success always goes to the director and the curator. Once an exhibition is mounted or a collection installed (the handling of the objects usually under the supervision of the registrar), the importance of the education department in interpreting the objects to the public is widely acknowledged. Mounting an exhibition, whether scholarly or not, is much like producing a play, and anyone familiar with the theater will appreciate the similarities between the registrar's function and that of the stage manager—with the important difference that the registrar has responsibilities before the opening that

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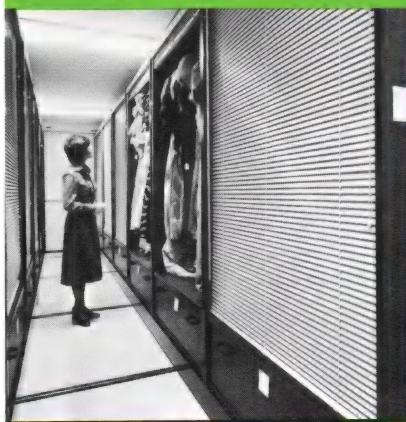
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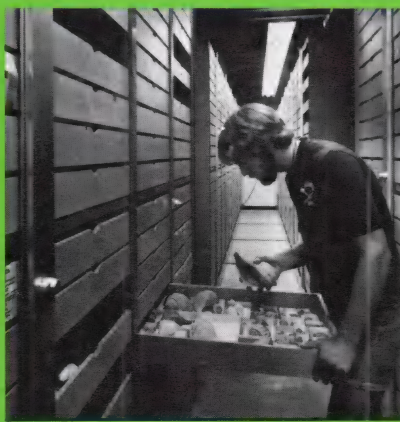
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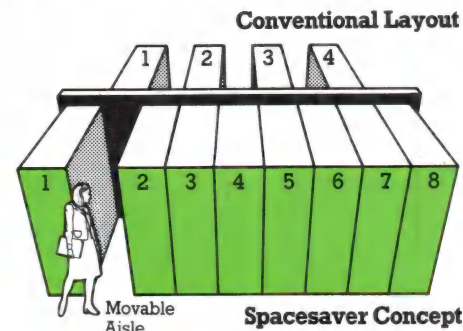
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COMMENTARY

range from those of the theatrical producer to those of several crew heads. Once the show is open, or as it begins to take shape either in the gallery or upon the stage, both the registrar and the stage manager are responsible for keeping things moving smoothly and coordinating large numbers of people and activities. A theater audience has never applauded a stage manager, and praise for stage managers in reviews is implicit at best, but there are noteworthy differences between the way stage managers and registrars are regarded within their respective professions. First, a good stage manager is highly prized by producers and directors, who appreciate the knowledge and competency the job requires. They are also well aware of the disasters that might occur if the stage manager is incompetent. Stage managers are thus given and wield considerable authority as well as respect. Little known or appreciated by the audience, within his profession the stage manager is accorded a stature museum registrars seldom achieve.

The process of museum accreditation serves to illustrate the dilemma of museum registrars. The visiting accreditation team carefully examines the registration department, and, according to one Accreditation Commission chairman, the professionalism of the registrar's office is one of the determining factors in whether or not a museum will be accredited.² Yet registrars are hardly ever assigned to accreditation teams, despite the fact that several prominent registrars have expressed an interest in serving. On the face of it, it would seem clear that an experienced, well-established registrar would be the best person to evaluate the performance of other registrars. Conversely, a registrar whose museum is undergoing accreditation review is entitled to examination by his peers. Participation by registrars would be of great benefit to the Museum Assessment Program as well.

In the future, for the benefit of both registrars and the museum profession, the knowledge, expertise and intelligence of registrars must be used far more

than they are at present. Not only should registrars take a more active role in accreditation, they should be appointed to all committees that study or shape issues of concern to the museum profession as a whole. Not a single registrar was appointed to the Commission on Museums for a New Century. Even more remarkable, a recently appointed American Association of Museums committee to study conservation and maintenance of collections includes neither a registrar nor a collections manager. Only recently have registrars begun to serve on the AAM Council. Such recognition was not easily achieved, and indications are that it will not continue without diligence and determination on the part of registrars, who continue to nominate one of their number by petition. Neither registrars nor curators often appear on the slate of officers and councilors selected by the AAM's nominating committee.

By the year 2000 the title "registrar" may be defunct. Because tasks performed by the registrar have, during the past generation, increased in both number and complexity, many would like to see a new title reflecting the heavier responsibilities and administrative loads. At present, however, many museum professionals, who remain unaware of how much the information explosion and technological innovations have affected registrars, are reluctant to endorse a change in the registrar's title. Registrars themselves are far from united on this issue. Moreover no other title adequately reflects the multiplicity of duties performed by registrars, especially when there is still great disparity in the specific responsibilities of registrars from one institution to another, not to mention among various types of museums. "Collections manager," a title originating in natural history museums, has flourished during the past decade. For some this is a valid title, distinguishable from the registrarial function. But what to do then about the registrar who serves as information specialist and exhibitions coordinator? At all costs we must avoid euphemisms. Registrars are professionals who need not seek refuge behind such hybrid abominations as "curator of collections management."³

Museums are returning to an emphasis on their collections: the need to conserve, display and encourage research on their own holdings. After the decade of

the mega-exhibition this looking inward seems almost a novel idea. Prior to the 1970s, registrars were primarily responsible for monitoring the permanent collections of their museums and collecting and preserving information pertaining to them. In many museums this has not changed, but in museums that have come increasingly to rely upon elaborate loan exhibitions, the demands on registrars and their staffs have been extraordinary. Since traveling and loan exhibitions are not likely to disappear from the museum scene — nor should they — their requirements may be further justification for a division of duties between what might be called a collections manager and an exhibitions coordinator, another title that has gained popularity in recent years. With continued proliferation of duties, it is conceivable that the work of today's registrar may in the future be handled by two or three specialists. At that point, new and sensible titles will suggest themselves.

Because registrars are usually skilled in handling complex tasks and have a broad range of knowledge for which the

business world is willing to pay, several established registrars, and even more assistant registrars, have joined the migration from museums into the business sector. As registration becomes an increasingly technological pursuit, this crossover is likely to become more serious. Technical skills coupled with intelligence and knowledge of the humanities will be even more prized by the corporate sector in the years ahead. It has already been several years since college majors in business, management or computer science have taken more than a smattering of humanities courses, and they hardly ever study a foreign language.

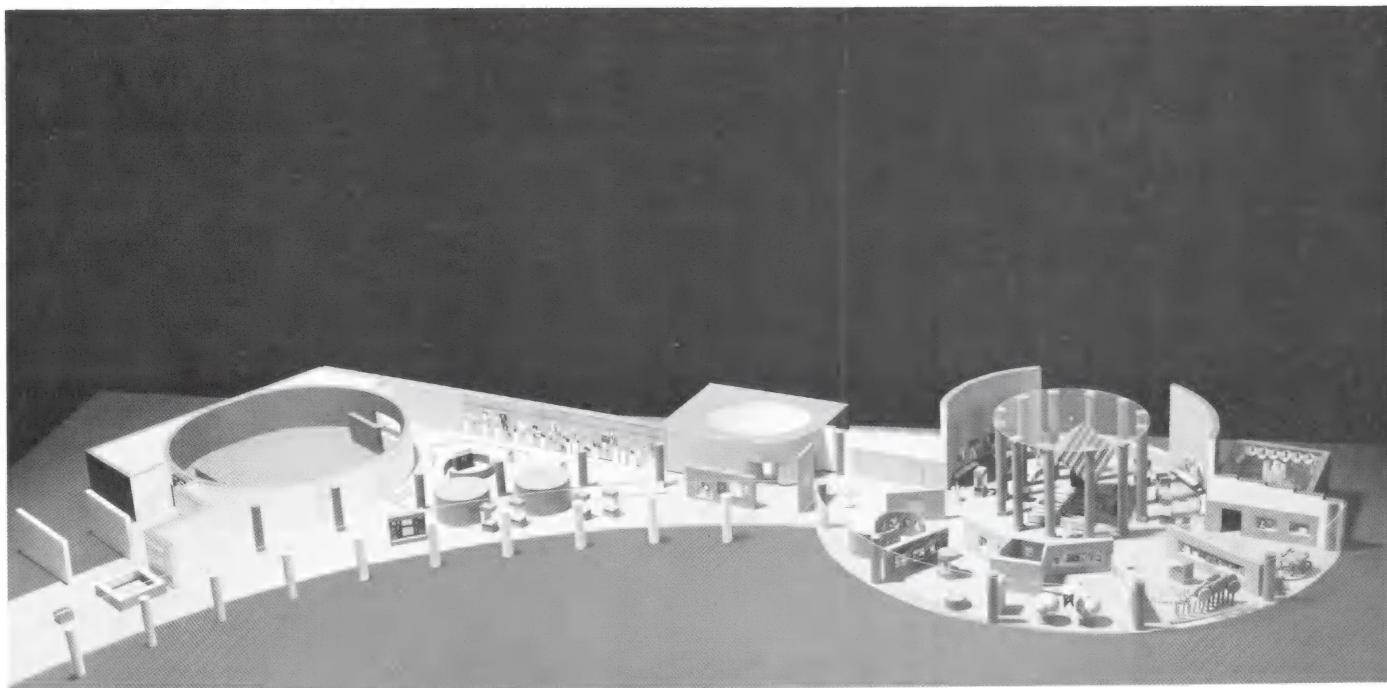
In summary, the duties of museum registrars have become increasingly complex during the latter part of this century, and will continue to do so into the next. With the increased need for knowledgeable, well-qualified and highly skilled people has come a new level of professionalism, although recognition of that has lagged behind. The status of registrars must be improved, not to placate the disgruntled or soothe tender egos, but to ensure that

the registrars — or whatever they may then be called — of the 21st century are equal to the challenges they will face as both society and technology adjust to the complexities of progress. Young people must be able to decide with confidence and enthusiasm that there is a career in museum registration which will offer both professional satisfaction and a competitive salary. Otherwise the most precious resources of any century — human intelligence, imagination and diligence — will be in short supply in a discipline in which they are critically needed. Δ

Notes

1. American Association of Museums, *America's Museums: The Belmont Report* (Washington, D.C.: AAM, 1969).
2. Mildred Compton, discussion with the AAM Registrars Committee, June 6, 1979.
3. For written descriptions of the duties of "registrar" and "collections manager," and suggested qualifications for those jobs, see "Museum Studies: A Second Report," *Museum News* 59, no. 2 (October 1980): 26-31.

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A New Look at Fire Protection

Stephen W. Musgrove



FIRE! Perhaps no other word in the English language elicits such immediate, emotional response. And for those of us who are charged with safeguarding our physical heritage, fire conveys particularly dreadful notions. The loss of a museum and its holdings is a nightmare that we all share—and all hope to avoid.

Given the irreplaceable nature of our collections and the undeniable totality of fire's destructive force, it is inconceivable that we should underestimate this omnipresent threat. Yet, when the director of a recently completed art museum was asked why his institution did not use modern sprinkling systems, he replied, "We're not planning to have a fire." Neither did the Museum of Modern Art when it burned, resulting in both collections damage and loss of life.

STEPHEN W. MUSGROVE is assistant director of the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte, North Carolina.

There are, in fact, scores of "unplanned" museum fires in the United States every year, ranging from burned-out motors and coffee pots to the computer exhibit blaze at the Smithsonian's Museum of American History and the San Diego Aerospace Museum disaster.

Like cancer, fire is a fact of life which we all acknowledge, but which many assiduously try to ignore, trusting that basic preventive measures and blind luck will keep our institutions safe. It is not a popular subject, is discussed at few conferences and is written about even less. As a result, the museum community has a wide variety of lay opinions, backed by little experience and old prejudices. Unfortunately, most of what we think we know about fire control measures is apocryphal: tales of malfunctioning systems drowning fragile collections in an unending flood of water are myriad. When the purveyors of this common tale are asked to cite a specific example, the stories become mythical,

facts turn to theory and someone invariably asks, "Who wants to take a chance on water damage anyway? It's much worse than smoke damage, isn't it?"

But the old ways of looking at fire protection need examining. The recent experience of the Mint Museum in Charlotte, North Carolina, is a case in point.

One Museum's Approach

During the design and development phase of its building expansion program (see MUSEUM NEWS, June 1983), fire safety was addressed as a primary consideration. Public safety and the protection of the collections were paramount. The museum integrated an overall approach to fire prevention and response with the programmatic requirements of its various departments, identifying three areas of concern: the type and technique of building construction; systems and procedures for detecting and reporting heat and/or smoke; methods

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to be employed in containing, controlling and extinguishing fires. As is typically the case in museum building projects, our objective became simple and clear. If we could control structural design while at the same time incorporating reliable, sophisticated early warning systems, the need for extinguishing agents could be reduced to a minimum or even eliminated. After all, every museum professional "knew" that sprinklers were to be avoided.

The plan that emerged was both thoughtful and comprehensive. The building would be constructed of steel-reinforced concrete. Decorative moldings and the like were to be made of stone and wood. Plastics were totally

banned—hard lessons had been learned from the acrid smoke of the MGM Grand Hotel fire. The structure would be divided into a number of distinct fire control zones, each sealed by automatic fire doors. Mechanical systems would be designed to shut down automatically so that smoke would not be distributed to other parts of the building through ventilation ducts. And so it went. Carpets, paints, wall surfaces—all would be scrutinized to select those elements least likely to contribute to the spread of fire.

Fire detection systems were next on the list. Standard smoke detection equipment proved adequate to satisfy requirements of the building codes but did not offer the level of protection and sophistication desired. And since reporting is done via a standard telephone line, if that link is made inoperative for any reason (explosion, lightning strike, accidental disconnect, etc.), an alarm signal cannot be transmitted effectively. Further, while typical systems may indicate the building zone in which fire is

suspected, most do not transmit that data outside the building. They simply turn in a general alarm.

To counter these shortcomings, a more complex system was designed, using readily available components. Because different detectors have various capabilities, the museum selected a combination of units, including ionization, photoelectric and rate-of-rise heat detectors. These would be used in various combinations to ensure the earliest possible detection of combustion and "precombustion" situations. The detectors would be arranged in zones corresponding to the structural zones of the building, and each zone would be connected to a central monitoring panel that is a major component of the intrusion, or burglar, alarm system.

The advantages to integrating the fire and intrusion systems are several. It simplifies the planning of conduits for the new building. A single vendor can maintain and monitor all alarms of all types. Only one power source (with auxiliary) is required. All trouble signals

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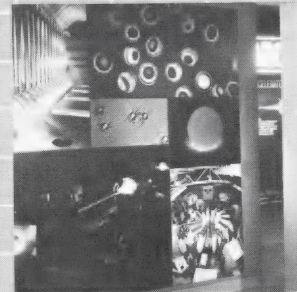
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can be transmitted over the same dedicated and monitored telephone line, thus reducing line rental costs. (A dedicated line runs between two points, like an intercom, and can be used for the single purpose of providing communication between those two points.)

The intrusion alarm for the Mint Museum was designed as a highly specialized and versatile system with an Underwriters Laboratories rating of Class AA-2. Among other things, it can send coded signals that indicate the precise location of the fire. Thus, the fire department can plan its suppression approach as it receives the call. More important, the transmission line of this system is monitored 24 hours per day, ensuring that the communications link is always available and in good working order. A dead line initiates an immediate response and investigation.

The Mint's plan also addressed methods for extinguishing potential fires. A two-pronged approach was proposed. First, the staff would be trained in fire response measures, including proficiency in the use of hand-held fire extinguishers, which would be liberally supplied throughout all areas of the building. Three types of extinguishers — ABC dry chemical, carbon dioxide and halogenated hydrocarbon hand-held — would be matched to the specific needs of the areas where they might be employed. Medium-sized units would be used because several members of the staff could not handle large, heavy extinguishers. The second factor was the fire department itself. Two engine companies, one stationed three-quarters of a mile from the museum, the other three miles away, would provide excellent coverage.

The overall plan, encompassing Class 2 fireproof construction techniques, advanced electronic smoke detection, highly secure alarm/data transmission and reliable fire response measures, met with great acceptance and enthusiasm. The building and its systems exceeded all applicable building codes, and the electronic measures were viewed as the most advanced in the state. All of this notwithstanding, the local fire marshal still recommended the use of sprinklers, "just to be safe." So did other local authorities who had experience in operating public buildings.

The lack of resolution on this issue seemed to stem from a philosophical difference between what was best for the

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museum's collections and what was best for the museum's structure.

More research into the sprinkler/museum issue was indicated. Little written material was available, and most of that was hopelessly dated, so a survey appeared to be the best method for obtaining solid data on both the opinions and preferences of today's museum professionals. The Mint Museum prepared a questionnaire, distributing it nationally in the spring of 1983. The response was most gratifying. More than 70 percent of museums contacted responded! This alone indicated a high level of interest in the subject. And most respondents requested copies of the results and any reports that might grow out of that survey. This article is, in part, a response to those requests.

An analysis of the questions raised and the answers received appears below.

Once the data were compiled, the Mint Museum decided to conduct a number of telephone interviews with selected respondents. The results of both surveys present an interesting picture that differs in several key areas from the traditional "no sprinklers" position of museum professionals.

The response to question 5 clearly indicates that the majority would not recommend the use of water sprinklers in a new museum building. But it is important to note that this is an undifferentiated question. It was intended to test whether the old all-encompassing "no sprinklers" catechism was still alive and well. It seems to be.

However, the other questions and responses provide a much different picture of current thinking and practice. Blanket rules and statements are being challenged and replaced by selective processes. While the majority of respondents do not use sprinkling systems in their exhibitions galleries and collections storage areas (questions 1 and 2), they *do* use them in a wide variety of support areas. To put it another way, selective use of this technology tends to ban it from those areas

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Mint Museum Questionnaire

1. Does your museum use an automatic sprinkling system in its exhibitions galleries?

11% ☐ YES
89% ☐ NO

Most of the museums reported using water sprinklers in exhibitions galleries; a few reported using halogenated hydrocarbon gas to suppress fire.

2. Does your museum use an automatic sprinkling system in its collections storage areas?

27% ☐ YES
73% ☐ NO

3. Does your museum use automatic sprinkling systems in any areas other than galleries and collections storage?

62% ☐ YES
38% ☐ NO

Those areas most often listed as being sprinkled include carpentry and paint shops, workshops, basements, loading/shipping docks, mechanical equipment rooms and offices.

4. Would you be inclined to lend objects from your collections, or entire exhibitions, to a museum that had automatic water sprinkling systems in its exhibitions galleries and/or collections storage areas?

32% ☐ YES
68% ☐ NO

5. To plan the installation of an automatic water sprinkling system in a new museum is:

12% ☐ Highly desirable
18% ☐ Moderately desirable
23% ☐ Not very desirable
17% ☐ Undesirable
30% ☐ Totally undesirable

— OR —

30% ☐ Desirable
70% ☐ Undesirable

where collections are present, while admitting it in most other areas.

Question 4 addresses a critical issue often overlooked in gallery design discussions. Many museums rely on a program of changing exhibitions and traveling shows to attract audiences, press coverage, grants and other forms of support. Yet, if the responses in this survey accurately reflect the opinions (i.e., policies) of the museum profession, two-thirds of the sources for loan exhibitions are closed to institutions that have water sprinklers in their exhibition areas. Many larger museums simply refuse to lend any portion of their collections to institutions with "wet" galleries.

The individual nature of each museum must be taken into account when fire suppression systems are discussed or planned. A 19th-century timbered structure needs a fire control program different from that for a modern facility built of prestressed concrete. Science centers have fire potentials unknown in art galleries. The list is endless.

Nevertheless, the Mint Museum's response to the general question of sprinkling may prove interesting. Given the fireproof construction of its galleries, and wishing to protect its collections as well as its access to loan materials from other institutions, the museum decided not to install sprinkler systems in any exhibition space. Collections storage areas will be fitted with halogenated hydrocarbon suppression systems — thus eliminating the threat of water damage to collections while providing maximum, reliable fire suppression. All other areas will be equipped with standard water sprinkler systems.

Other museums will require different selective adaptations of systems available or required in their communities. But an age-old blanket taboo against sprinklers has been lifted. A prudent combination of thoughtful analysis and current technologies can make our museums fire-safe now, and for generations to come. Δ

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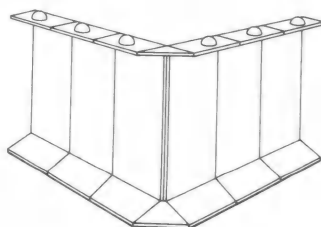
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EDITOR'S NOTES

Volume 62, Number 6

August 1984

Nearly three years ago, the Commission on Museums for a New Century set out to consider what lies ahead for American museums and propose an agenda for the future that would serve museums well in a world of change and challenge. The commission's report, *Museums for a New Century*, is about to be published by the American Association of Museums, and in this issue of MUSEUM NEWS we present a preview. During the course of their work, commission members met with people from within and outside the museum profession. They contemplated the societal trends that are likely to affect museums, talked about the hurdles and the opportunities inherent in the likelihoods of the future and considered some internal trends and needs that require attention. Eschewing the crystal ball approach, they concentrated instead on what is known about museums and what is known and expected about the world around them, and put the two together. They clarified present circumstances in order to look with vision toward the future.

I have been engaged in the commission process, too, as the project's staff director. I write this column with some difficulty, torn between abject humility about the commission's accomplishments and cliché-ridden praise for a report we hope will leave its mark on American museums. Of the many impressions I have of my work with the commission, two predominate: the new "mind-set" we have tried to create using the commission process as a starting point, and the new motivations I see emerging as the community of museums continues to evolve.

A process like the commission is always a thing unto itself, defying comparison with other superficially similar exercises and having effects far beyond the tangible and the visible. In the case of the Commission on Museums, our most concrete aim was to publish a report about the future of American museums. Now the book and the efforts that led to it are complete.

But appearances are misleading, because we had a less obvious, but no less important, purpose. We wanted the commission's work to be only the beginning of a continuing process involving the museum community and its growing network of compatriots and supporters. It seems as though the museum community has gotten the message we hoped it would. Thinking about change, about the relationship of museums to the world around them, about the value of the museum—as institution and as idea—in providing certainty in uncertain times, should not be the sole province of a special commission. It should happen continuously. This may not be easy in the face of

the pressing everyday concerns of museum work. But innovation, change and the successful promotion of the museum cause can only be accomplished in the context of a firm, articulate understanding of the value of museums to our society. It is already apparent that the commission process has encouraged people in museums to speak a slightly different language, reflecting not crisis but challenge, not what museums need from society but what museums and society can give each other. This is an accomplishment to be proud of.

Another remarkable thing about the commission is the new motivation it has given museums as a group of institutions. The community of museums has been taking shape for some years now, as museums have coalesced in response to the issues and concerns they have in common. They have discovered their similarities, but not how to use them in an active way. Now these similarities among museums are becoming the basis for an active determination to make museums more effective servants of society and stewards of our heritage. Museums aren't seeking common ground simply because they can solve problems better with a little help from their friends. It has become apparent that the collective, active affirmation of the role and value of museums is absolutely essential if museums are to function well.

In the spirit of the commission process, we invited two people from outside museums—Rudolph H. Weingartner and Joseph F. Coates—to contribute to this issue of MUSEUM NEWS. Weingartner, who participated in one of the commission's colloquiums, offers his view of the role of museums in society. Coates, who is involved in futures research, gives a personal perspective on museums that is bound to raise some strong feelings among our readers. Then we asked a group of commission members to reflect on the process and what it meant to them. Rounding out the issue is Metropolitan Museum of Art director Philippe de Montebello's article on a topic that looms large in the future of museums—the conflict that arises when special, highly visible activities begin to push a museum's basic functions aside.

Museums for a New Century will be published in the beginning of October. Read it—it has a message for everyone who is committed to shaping a future for museums that is at least as rich as the tradition of our institutions would augur.

Kellen Cochran Hicks



The Growing Museum Movement

Chapter 1 of the Report of the Commission on Museums for a New Century

During one of the commission's open forums, we were reminded of Aristotle's belief that men and women come together in cities in order to become more human. "Certainly," we were told, "men and women come into museums in some ways to become more human and to discover . . . that collective experience charged with moral energy is still alive and well in America." The act of contributing to the richness of the collective human experience is at the very heart of what museums are all about. By helping us summon our natural capacities for empathy, for vicarious experience, for intellectual growth, museums summon the humanity in us.

Through their collections and their programs, museums offer rich encounters with reality, with the past, with what exists now and with what is possible. They stimulate curiosity, give pleasure, increase knowledge. Museums acquaint us with the unfamiliar, coaxing us beyond the safety of what we already know. And they impart a freshness to the familiar, disclosing miracles in what we have long taken for granted. Museums are gathering places, places of discovery, places to find quiet, to contemplate and to be inspired. They are our collective memory, our chronicle of human creativity, our window on the natural and physical world.

Museums in this country are individually magnificent, from the large and encyclopedic institutions to the small and jewel-like collections, from new neighborhood museums to institutions a century old, from art galleries to

The commission's report, *Museums for a New Century*, will be published on October 1, 1984. It is available to AAM members for \$13.95; the price for nonmembers is \$17.95. Orders should be addressed to the AAM, P.O. Box 33399, Washington, D. C. 20033.

botanical gardens, to historic sites, to science-technology centers to zoos. Together, museums are even more magnificent. Their collective significance to American life, their aggregate value, makes museums a national resource. They are the stewards of this country's common wealth—a wealth of spirit, of substance, of cultural abundance.

American museums today are enormously popular places. There are nearly 5,000 of them, in all regions of the country, in communities of all sizes. Our nation's museums have a long tradition of scholarship, education and public service. Their contributions to our intellectual and cultural life, their capacity for encouraging inquiry and vision, make them cornerstones of democratic society. Millions of people visit museums each year, seeking knowledge, enjoyment and a greater understanding of other peoples, other places, other times. Museums help make their communities pleas-



ing places to live and to visit, too; as cultural amenities, they help attract business investment and the tourist dollar.

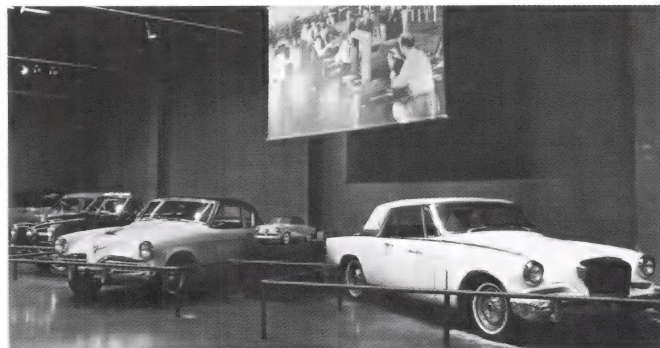
Beyond the direct significance of museums to their communities and their visitors is the constellation of values museums represent. The commitment to preserving, cherishing and learning from the artifacts and customs of our heritage—the commitment museums were the first to make—is permeating American life. There is a new enthusiasm for collecting, for acquiring objects that have personal meaning or represent disappearing traditions of craftsmanship. On a larger scale, the values museums espouse launched the historic preservation movement and helped fuel the growing pride in community and ethnic history.

Museums represent certainty in uncertain times. As contemporary life grows more impersonal, people need to be reminded that there is a continuity to human existence and the natural and physical world, and they need a way to connect their own experience to what is known about the past and the present. It could be said that our times are creating a museum movement.

During the course of our work for the commission, we found evidence of this growing museum movement. We heard expressions of respect for museums and admiration for the museum community's eagerness to prepare for the

future. We perceived considerable confidence in the constant, enduring and familiar characteristics of museums. From city planner Alan Jacobs, who talked of his "incredible and growing joy" in going to museums, to newspaper columnist Kevin Starr, who said museums are places where "people can come and feel that what is done is important and possessed of authority," the people who participated in the commission process reaffirmed that museums—and the values they represent—are the touchstones our society needs now and for the future.

It is precisely this public confidence that offers museums a significant challenge: how to retain their permanence and authority while embracing a larger public role and responding to new social responsibilities. It is important to remember that American museums have always been engaged in a process of democratization. Unlike their Euro-



pean counterparts, which were usually founded to house the great collections of the nobility, American museums evolved in a tradition befitting a democratic society. Nathaniel Burt describes it this way:

The American museum was and is an idea. The European museum was a fact. Almost without exception the European museum was first a collection. With few exceptions most American museums were first an ideal . . . Almost without exception the larger American museums began with a deliberate appeal to the public. Most of the earlier European museums remained semi-exclusive cabinets of curiosities visible only to a few. The American museum began, and has remained, wide open.

Although American museums owe a great deal to the beneficence of collectors and patrons, many of them indeed grew out of the deliberate desire to diffuse useful knowledge, to refine discriminating taste, to take responsibility for what Benjamin Ives Gilman called "forwarding the life of the imagination." Early atheneums assembled collections for scientific and literary study. Art museums were founded with the idea that the public should enjoy great art. A strong pride in the new nation gave rise to the preservation of historic sites.

Museums have a strong and credible position as institutions in society today because they have always assumed a public dimension. The charters of museums founded in the 19th century embraced the Victorian impulse toward social reform. In the 1930s and 1940s museums sought to stress their educational function. The fervent idealism of the 1960s prompted museums even further toward public service.

Perhaps the largest steps in the democratization of museums in the United States have been taken in the last 15 years. In the turbulence of the late 1960s and early 1970s, museums were perceived as ivory towers outside the mainstream of society. Their traditional power and authority was challenged, their relevance to society questioned. In the struggle to respond, museums reaffirmed their commitment to a public role. They reached out into the community, initiating programs and activities for senior citizens, minorities, the handicapped and others who traditionally had felt excluded. The community of museums itself expanded to include new institutions addressing interests and heritages not adequately represented in existing institutions. Both physically and intellectually, museums became more accessible to more people.

At the same time museums, along with other institutions in the nonprofit sector, have recognized their integral relationship to the rest of society and a fuller sense of accountability for their actions. "The texture of American life," Stephen Weil has observed, "is thickening. No matter how special we may feel, [museums] are an inextricable

part of the American community, and its future will be ours. As its life becomes more complex, so will ours."

In the course of this "thickening," museums have taken more seriously their obligations as public trusts. They have established both institutional and individual standards of quality and ethics. A broad-based, public-private system of financial support has developed, with government, business, foundations, individuals and museums themselves all sharing the responsibility. What has evolved in the past 15 years is, in short, a much higher degree of self-consciousness. Museums are now more deeply aware of their public obligations and their integral role in our nation's social and cultural life.

Museums also see more clearly their connection to one another. There is an emerging sense of community among museums, a kind of internal democratization, that defies the arguments of those who thought museums were too disparate to speak a common language. There *are* differences among museums—some of them superficial, some fundamental—but the differences seem to make the community thrive. The American museum universe has been expanding in both scope and size since the 19th century and will likely continue to grow as the times demand. In fact, we contend that the healthy future of this country's museums depends on the recognition that each institution lends its own variation to the objectives all museums share. It may be difficult to imagine the similarities among such institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, the Indianapolis Children's Museum, the Adler Planetarium, the Buffalo Bill Historical Center and Colonial Williamsburg. But all have a legitimate place in the museum domain through their dedication to real things and the ideas those things embody.

The act of collecting and preserving objects is at the center of the museum domain. Just as important is the use of collections to advance knowledge and understanding, and thus it is through research, education and exhibition that museums make their collections available. The balance among these activities differs from museum to museum. Some museums use their collections primarily for research, while others have ambitious exhibition programs and do little research. The larger museums do all these things, and as such serve as centers of excellence in the intellectual and cultural life of this country, as well as in the museum community. Other museums engage in all these activities, but with fewer resources and less ambitious objectives. Still others focus attention on one activity more than others—in an art center, exhibitions, for example. But all museums share their dedication to the object as tangible evidence of our artistic, cultural, natural and scientific heritage. What we have in the community of museums is a vibrant pluralism that allows differences to flourish while, faithful to the meaning of a "community," we work together in a shared service toward shared goals





and the worthy stewardship of our nation's common wealth.

This report is for all who care about museums and the future of their contribution to the collective human experience. Our rapidly changing society will look to museums even more in the years to come. How well museums respond depends on their ability to sustain their current momentum. Given the pervasiveness of the values museums stand for, their strong ties to the rest of society and their growing sense of common identity, museums are in an excellent position to become their own most forceful advocates, to make their significance both profoundly felt and highly esteemed. The collective human experience, now more than ever, needs the enrichment museums can offer.

The Shape of the Future

The close of a century, the end of a millennium, 1984—all are symbolically appropriate times to take stock, review the past, consider the future. As the next century draws closer, we will enter a new, postindustrial era in which our machine-oriented system gives way to an idea- and

information-centered system. We will be presented with a new range of choices about the ethical and qualitative character of our lives. Today we have one foot in the past, while the other tests the future. We know how much social and technological change has already altered our lives, and we know we must monitor it carefully to retain our individualism. We cannot wait for the future to happen; we must embrace it and participate actively in its creation.

We are already experiencing many of the conditions that will shape the 21st century: massive geopolitical shifts, changes in the distribution of material wealth, a technological revolution, demographic change, dramatic assaults on the ecosystem, rising levels of education, a transition in the developed world to an economy based on information and the provision of services. The ramifications for natural phenomena and human actions are global in scale, leaving relatively little of the earth unaffected. The dimension of change is staggering, and it continues to accelerate.

More than half the human beings ever born are alive today. Within a few years, five billion people will share this planet, and by the end of the century, more than six billion. At that time only 20 percent of the world's population will

live in what we now consider the developed world — the United States, Canada, Europe, the Soviet Union, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

This fraction of the world's people now controls more than three-quarters of the world's wealth and consumes 85 percent of its resources. In the tropics, on the other hand, a third of the people are unable to obtain enough food for themselves and their families to avoid starvation.

The effects of such alarming imbalances impose new challenges for all social institutions in the developed world, including museums. On an international scale, museums foster the vital realization that we are citizens of a single

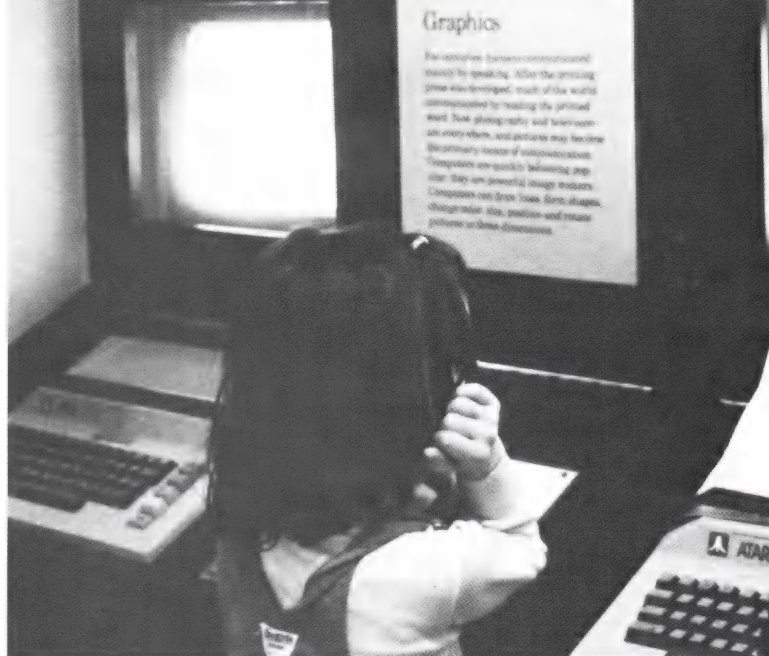
Museums have a role in making possible what futurists call a "choiceful future," for they deal with both the possibilities and the dangers.

planet in which the need for cooperation grows stronger every year. At the same time, museums can help preserve the diversity of human culture—a diversity rapidly disappearing.

Museums have another significant responsibility in educating people about the ability of our planet to sustain life. We live in an age in which plants, animals and microorganisms are becoming extinct at the most rapid rate in 65 million years. What this means is that up to one-sixth or more of the forms of life on earth may disappear forever during our lifetimes—a truly enormous change on a planetary scale, and one that may well seriously limit human potential in the future.

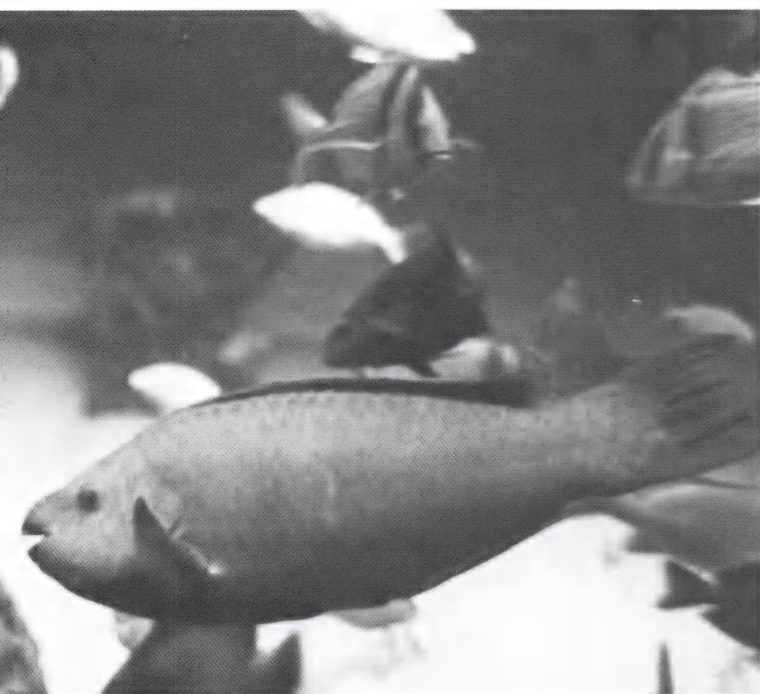
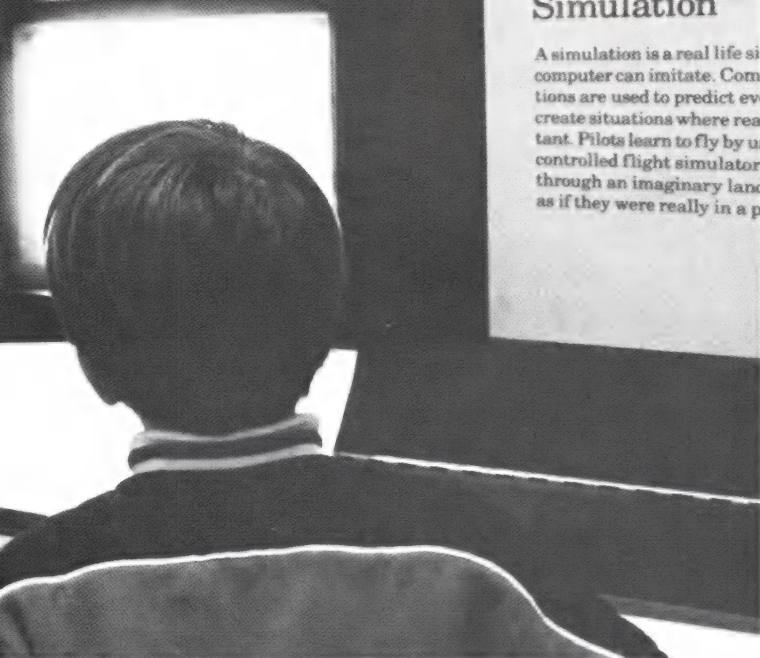
At the same time, our technological options are proliferating. The unprecedented scientific advances of the last 50 years and their accompanying applications have irrevocably altered our relationship to each other and our world. Many ravaging diseases are only history to us; the global attack on smallpox, for example, has completely eliminated it as a threat to human life, and antibiotics now effectively control tuberculosis and many other life-threatening diseases. We tinker with our hearts as if they were automobile engines, scan our bodies electronically and use laser surgery to correct problems we find. In the palms of our hands we hold devices that can outperform the room-sized computers of the early 1960s. Our nuclear capabilities make it possible for us to destroy virtually every living thing on earth. We know much about the workings of the universe, and we also have the ability to manipulate them. Both the possibilities and the dangers are greater than ever before.

Museums have a role in making possible what futurists call a "choiceful future," for they deal with both the possibilities and the dangers. Zoos and botanical gardens must find better ways to preserve and perpetuate their living collections, for as habitats disappear, some kinds of



Simulation

A simulation is a real life situation that a computer can imitate. Computers are used to predict events and create situations where reactions can be studied. Pilots learn to fly by using a controlled flight simulator through an imaginary landscape as if they were really in a plane.



plants and animals will exist only in these institutions. Science museums and science-technology centers have a public obligation to explain research developments and technological innovation and draw attention to the ethical questions they raise. And clearly, museums of art and history must be firmly committed to preserving the expressions of human creativity and the material evidence of an existence that is so profoundly affected by the global scale of change today.

Perhaps the only statement we can make with complete certainty about the next century is that it is not likely to be tranquil. It will not be a time for "business as usual," for museums or anyone else. There will be great stress, tremendous problems and a pressing need for high creativity. For museums, the trusted guardians of the objects of our heritage, the challenge will be to achieve the highest form of public service.

Museums and the Forces of Change

The commission set out to examine the state of American museums at the close of this century. As we looked at the social, economic, environmental and political trends shaping society today, we paid careful attention to those we believe should be of special importance to museums. Studying and speculating about the future is, we discovered, something of a trend itself. Futures research is a serious, useful process that does not attempt to approach prediction but to encourage careful thought about the scenarios we might find ahead, with "choice" and "options" the operative words. Business, government, education, all have adopted methods of futures research and incorporated them into their own future planning.

In considering museums, we looked at economic and demographic trends; changes in the family, the workplace and education; current transitions in values and lifestyles and new directions in science and technology. Having considered — from our future-oriented vantage point — the context in which museums function, we can attest to the value of the exercise, and we commend it to individual museums.

We have identified four forces of change in society today that will have significant implications for museums. Just as these forces will influence the future of museums, so have they guided this commission in its work and provided the foundation for our conclusions and recommendations.

A Proliferation of Voices

The first force of change concerns the way decisions are made. Quite simply, the way things get done is changing. Traditional hierarchical structures are being modified to accommodate, and in fact encourage, wider participation in the processes by which authority is vested and decisions are made. There is growing evidence of participatory decision making in the emergence of special-interest politics, the formation of new coalitions and networks to accom-

plish goals, the move toward new management styles and the promulgation of the premise that authority does not belong exclusively to large institutions, established professions or influential individuals. There are more voices involved in making decisions that affect individuals, segments of society and society as a whole. Consequently, both individuals and institutions face a wide array of options. Institutions that traditionally hold authority, too, are being compelled to examine and even modify their role in the larger society.

Participatory modes of decision making will have both internal and external implications for museums. Internally, new styles of management may affect governance and leadership. Collaborative, nonhierarchical approaches may alter internal institutional structures. Externally, museums will continue to explore the possibilities for collaboration with other museums and other cultural and community organizations. As a group with special interests of its own, the museum community needs to ensure that its base of support is broad and firm, and its unified voice clear, in order to secure an effective place in the changing political process.

Coming to Terms with Cultural Pluralism

The second major force of change we believe to have implications for museums is our society's evolving sense of its own pluralism. Our population has always been culturally and ethnically diverse, but that diversity has not always been accepted as a good thing. In recent years, however, cultural and ethnic heritages have been recognized as a distinctive element of the American character.

Yet we continue to be troubled by a fragmentation in our society. Assimilation as a national goal has been abandoned, and socioeconomic, racial and sexual inequality persists. In addition to the racial and ethnic diversity with which we are beginning to come to terms, we are asked to accept new lifestyles, different value systems. There is uncertainty, too, in attitudes toward changing family structures, new sex roles, new models for the structure of the workplace. We are also in the midst of marked shifts in the median age, birth rate and geographic concentrations of population and wealth. New centers of political and economic power are forming in the process.

When it comes to preserving cultural pluralism, museums have an important role to play. They represent cultural diversity in their collections and their exhibitions. The museum community—within its own institutional makeup—exemplifies our cultural pluralism. Institutions dedicated to fostering and preserving particular ethnic heritages will be increasingly important in helping Americans understand their historical experience from different perspectives. But museums are in an uncomfortably contradictory situation in that their celebration of pluralism does not always extend to their internal hierarchies. Their staffs and boards generally do not represent the full div-

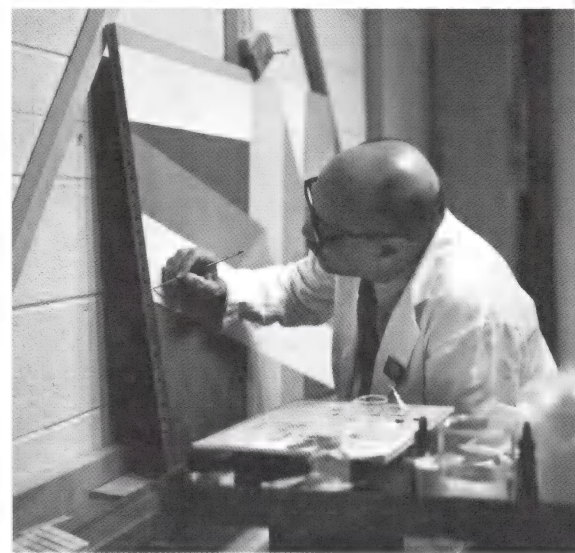
ersity of our society. This challenge of cultural pluralism to museums is immediate and especially complex. We will address it more directly in chapter 4.

An Upheaval in Education

The condition of this country's educational system has given rise to the third force of change in which museums have a stake. During 1982 and 1983 a so-called crisis in education led to calls for more rigorous standards in curriculum content, teacher preparation and the measurement of achievement. In *A Nation at Risk*, the National Commission on Excellence in Education chronicled the inadequacies of the nation's schools and urged widespread reform. *High School*, a report from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, demanded improvements in the nation's secondary schools. In *Educating Americans for the 21st Century*, a special commission of the National Science Board was very critical of the state of education in science, mathematics and technology, calling, again, for widespread, fundamental change and a greater role for museums and other informal educational institutions.

On the positive side, informal, voluntary education is gaining credibility, as more and more people—particularly adults—look for ways to continue learning either to improve their skills, increase their personal knowledge or simply to enjoy their more abundant leisure. The changing demographic characteristics of the population—an older population as the baby boom generation moves through adulthood, speculation about a smaller baby boom that will reverse the trend of declining school enrollments—





will make education a focus of debate for decades to come.

In a society that puts such heavy emphasis on education and has such high expectations for its schools, it is not surprising that tumult and cries for reform so frequently prevail. The real strengths in the system may well be obscured now by attempts to make schools serve too great a variety of social needs. As it reaches to the heart of the problem, the current reform movement forces a reassessment of the realistic limits of formal education. In museums, too, the meaning of the learning experience, the relation of museums to schools and the mechanism for education in the museum setting all demand careful attention. For these reasons, we have devoted a full chapter of this report to the museum learning experience.

Wiring in to the Information Age

The phenomenal revolution in communication and information technology is the fourth force of change that will have serious implications for museums in the future. We live in a "wired society," in which television and the microchip alone have made the experience of our generation profoundly different. Only 15 years ago we were amazed to sit in front of our televisions and see men walk on the moon. Today we accept the instant connection to distant events as commonplace. Now entering its fifth generation, the computer has evolved from a cumbersome giant that could do complex mathematics to a portable machine that can manage a whole realm of information and is quickly becoming an accepted part of our daily lives. The intensified competition for the home computer market during the past few years is an indication that the computer soon will be, like the television set, a piece of household furniture.

Museums can both affect and be affected by the electronic age. Information management technology, too, could very well revolutionize museum operations, especially in collections management and public programs. In the way they choose to use communications technology in

the exhibition halls and educational activities, however, museums can have a civilizing, humanizing influence on a population that may well need a respite from the "high-tech" era. There could be wider access to museums through new forms of communication, not replacing the museum experience but giving more people the incentive to enjoy museums at firsthand. And the general knowledge of museums and what they do could grow, to their benefit.

Where Museums Are Today

The legacy of the past and the shape of the future put museums today at the beginning of an era of considerable opportunity and challenge. There is a burgeoning museum movement in America, inspired by the values that museums espouse. People are making the commitment of museums their own personal commitment, and at the same time they are viewing museums with increased affection and appreciation. Museums have always been places for people, but despite long-standing public interest, there is nothing in the past to compare to the current lively enthusiasm Americans have for their museums. The sense of community among museums and their common identity as pluralistic institutions continue to evolve. As the open, democratic nature of museums becomes more emphatic, the relationship of museums to the rest of society — institutions and individuals alike — becomes even stronger.

It is the contention of this commission that museums have a twofold task today. We have described the forces of change in society that are most likely to affect museums, and it is imperative that the museum community recognize and participate in them. We have also described the contributions museums can make to the quality of the human experience, and we believe that there must be a purposeful movement toward the full realization of that potential.

These two activities must exist in balance for museums to thrive; they are the inseparable prerequisites for a mean-

ingful future. Attention to societal change is important because those who support, lead and work in museums cannot afford to be oblivious to the connection their institutions have to the rest of American life. They must be able to distinguish those changes that most directly affect museums, for both the long and short terms. More to the point, museums must participate in the continuum, not simply observe it or react to it. The structure of museums and the way they build their relationships with their communities and other institutions must be in harmony with the times.

There must be harmony, too, between this awareness of external conditions and the strong sense of internal identity that museums, as a community, have only begun

to clarify. Although we speak with pride and satisfaction of the sense of unity among museums, we must remember that it is still new and still growing. There are considerable opportunities for museums to use that unity to advocate the essential nature of the service they provide society.

To help museums begin the task, this commission has looked carefully at American museums as they exist today, as they have evolved in the recent past, as we think they might develop in the future. Each of us has a strong personal commitment to museums. We take considerable pride in the integrity of the nation's museums, their intellectual independence and the unique nature of their value to American life. We could easily spend the rest of our report extolling the virtues of institutions for which we,

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like the public, have great affection, but that would be both inappropriate and unproductive. Our challenge, after all, is to attempt leadership and vision for the future. Museums encourage careful thought, and a strong point of the museum community has always been its capacity for self-evaluation.

We have therefore singled out seven conditions in museums today that need to be approached with fresh insight and vision.

First, *there are pressing needs with regard to the growth, organization and care of museum collections.* Museum staff, trustees and supporters must turn closer attention to the current and future condition of the objects that are the heart of our museums.

Museums have not yet realized their potential as educational institutions. Despite a long-standing and serious commitment to their function as institutions of informal learning, there is a troublesome gap between reality and potential that must be addressed by policy makers in education and in museums.

The times demand strong and sophisticated leadership for museums. *Their organizational structure, in particular their system of governance, needs reexamination to ensure that it will meet the demands of the future.*

The museum community has never adequately described or aggressively promoted the significant contributions museums make to the quality of the human experience. In their own best interests, and in the interests of the public they serve, museums need to market their assets more thoroughly and effectively.

The diversity of the community of museums is not fully representative of the diversity of the society it seeks to serve. In museum governance and staffing in particular, museums have much to gain by making a commitment to diversity and participatory decision making.

There is no adequate profile of American museums. As a mature and public profession, the museum field has an obligation to set up a mechanism for continuously collecting and analyzing data about museums.

Finally, *the economic situation in museums is extremely fragile.* Future economic stability is an issue that both museums and their supporters must address, for financial health is essential if museums are to fulfill their responsibilities and satisfy the expectations society holds for them.

The Commission's Recommendations

We hope our recommendations will point to opportunities on the horizon and guide both individual museums and the museum community toward long-term solutions and lasting change. They are directed to museum leaders and to other museum professionals, in museums of all types and sizes, to leaders in business and foundations, museum trustees, educators, government officials at all levels, the media and leaders of a vast array of community service



organizations that share the "independent sector" with museums.

There are two types of recommendations. In chapters 2 and 3 we establish two priorities for action — the growth, organization and care of museum collections and the function of museums as institutions of learning. In chapters 4 through 7 we propose avenues for taking action that involve stimulating effective leadership and an atmosphere of professionalism, extending collaborative efforts with other institutions at a variety of levels, increasing public awareness of the essential service museums provide and working toward achieving long-term financial stability.

Our recommendations are not intended to be read in isolation. Their meaning derives wholly from the context in which they are presented; the ideas we express in the following chapters are equally as important. Δ

The commission makes 16 recommendations, which are summarized in chapter 1 and elaborated on in the remainder of the report. The recommendations directly address the seven conditions described above and relate to six areas: collections, learning, leadership and professionalism, collaboration, public awareness of museums and financial stability.

—Ed.

The Power of the Museum Idea

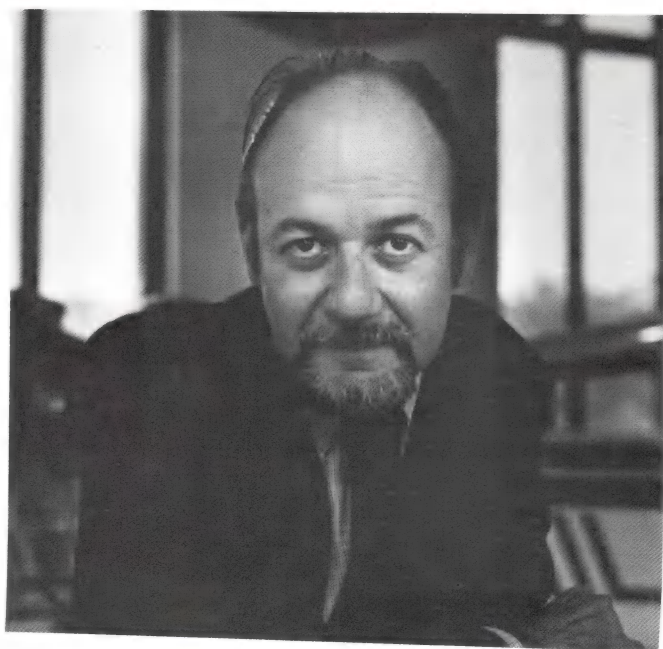
We wanted to know what being a part of the Commission on Museums for a New Century had meant to those involved, so we invited a few commission members to reflect, in a personal way, on the experience. We asked them about what they had learned, what had surprised them most, what had affected their work as museum leaders, what changes they would make in their institutions. And we asked them what they hoped for the future of America's museums. Their responses—thoughtful and stimulating—are printed below.

JOEL N. BLOOM, director of the Franklin Institute Science Museum in Philadelphia, and EARL A. POWELL III, director of the

Commission Members Reflect on the Process

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, were cochairmen of the commission. The other commission members responding here include CRAIG C. BLACK, director of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County; MILDRED S. COMPTON, director emeritus of the Children's Museum, Indianapolis; EDMUND BARRY GAITHER, director of the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists, Boston; RICHARD W. LYMAN, president of the Rockefeller Foundation, New York City; ROBERT R. MACDONALD, director of the Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans; and PETER H. RAVEN, director of the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis.

—Ed.

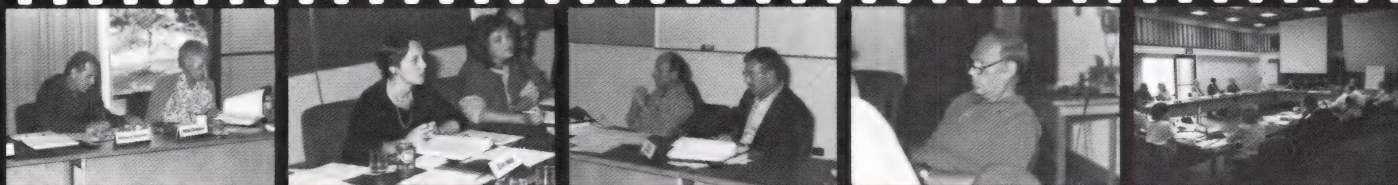


Joel N. Bloom

When Craig Black asked me to cochair the Commission on Museums for a New Century, I assumed that it would be essentially an extension of the long-range planning we had engaged in at the Franklin Institute. It was, but it was so much more that it became a qualitatively different experience.

While working on the Franklin Institute's plan, I found what seemed to be an amazing diversity of points of view from staff members working in different areas of our organization and from trustees with varying interests and backgrounds. But now, with the perspective gained from having served on the commission, I find that planning for a single museum is a somewhat parochial, relatively narrow effort conducted among people who essentially think alike. Work on the commission, on the other hand, forced me to confront in a sustained fashion a staggering diversity of views and interests, some from outside the group—from the participants in our forums and colloquia—but the majority from my fellow commissioners.

Having been active in a goodly number of AAM programs and having served on many varied grant review



panels, I thought that I was sensitive to the differences in the museum community. But it wasn't until I listened to my fellow commissioners speak passionately of conservation, of flora and fauna in the Amazon basin or of the breeding of endangered species that I came to grips with the incredibly broad richness of our community. And I was astonished, finally, at the ability of our community to transcend diversity and to find and express our major common needs and aspirations.

For me, serving on the commission was thus intellectually exciting and stimulating. Perhaps more important, it reinforced my pride in being a museum person. With the publication of our report, the commission's work is finished. I shall miss the heated discussions and seemingly endless drafting and redrafting sessions. But I look forward to participating in the much broader forum that will implement its recommendations.



Earl A. Powell III

My involvement as cochairman on the Commission on Museums for a New Century has been a fruitful, informative and fascinating experience at many levels. Art museum directors meet with some

frequency and exchange views and ideas on the issues related to the art museum. I have not, however, previously had an opportunity to sit with other museum professionals and trustees and explore the commonalities of our experiences in the management of America's cultural resources, and I found this opportunity provocative.

One of the most important aspects of the commission for me was a broadening of my own experience and a development of a deeper understanding concerning the cultural patrimony of the museums of our country. America's museums hold the wealth of our nation's cultural past and provide a unique opportunity through the interpretation and understanding of the collections to the education of multifaceted constituencies. One of the facts that began to emerge in our discussions and colloquia that affected my perception of the museum as it enters a new century is the enormous responsibility we have as institutions and as a nation to preserve and maintain the collected memory of mankind. In this context possibly the single greatest problem is conserving the past in order that it might be passed to future generations for their enjoyment and educational use. I would place that as an extremely high priority on the museum agenda. Developing expertise and supporting centers of conservation that can attend to these critical needs has been enforced in the mutual discussion and dialogue over the two years of the commission process.

We have learned as well a great deal about the problems facing museums in areas of funding and in the philosophical determinations surrounding the appropriateness of education curricula, large exhibitions and the maintenance and care of collections. What has been disturbing, however, is the fact that we have only limited data available to answer many basic questions fundamental to management; such information as important demographic data, levels of budgets, etc., has only recently begun to be assembled and studied. The establishment of a data base that would be accessible to museum professionals at all levels is clearly a project that should receive attention in the next few years.

The future of museums in the area of governance and management is, I believe, a secure one; but no matter how creative programs are or how many new conservation centers are created and staffed, the financial future of America's cultural institutions is precarious at best. Creative initiative must be taken in both the public and private sectors to ensure that the collections and programs of our museums can contrive to flourish.



Craig C. Black

The entire process of the commission has left me with very conflicting thoughts and emotions. Now that the process has been completed and the report is soon to be published, however, my overall reaction is one of pleasure at a task well done. I came to the commission with certain expectations and probably a misguided fervor. The late 1970s and very early 1980s were filled with discussions and writings on the future, on the incredible pace of change in Western society, on technical revolutions, radical demographic changes, information and communication revolutions.

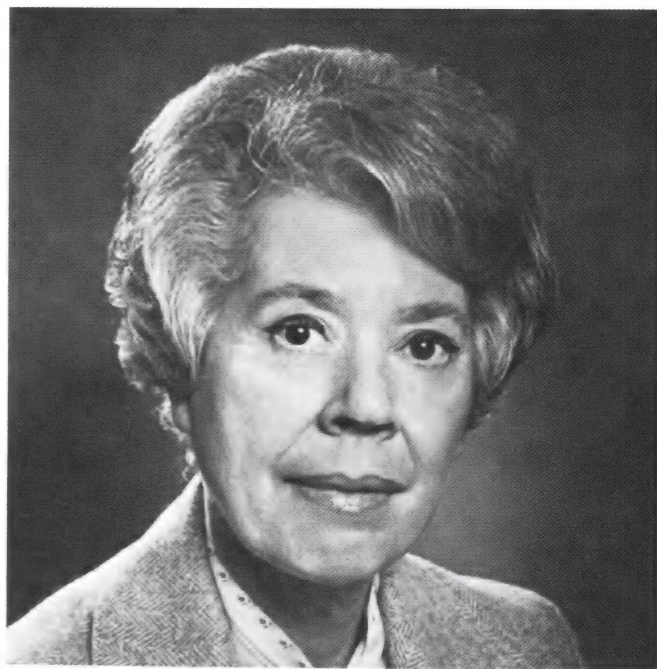
Where, in the midst of these sweeping societal changes, were museums? Our beloved institutions were almost totally ignored by those writing on the future of higher education, or the dramatic shift in population centers. As various institutional mainstays of our society—religions, educational systems and the country's basic industrial structure—were being altered, what was happening, or what was about to happen, to museums?

It was with this background that I came to the AAM annual meeting in 1981 to announce the creation of a Commission on Museums for a New Century. The charge to the commission was formidable: prepare a broad program, not for survival, but for leadership to bring museums into the next century as strong, provident institutions playing a well-understood and vital role in the new society. I envisioned the process as one in which the commission would be "let in on" the secrets of the future by those whose business it was to forecast the coming changes in our economy or the new politics brought on by changes in demography and population age structure. What opportunities would technology offer us? How might we respond to new patterns of formal and informal education? In short I was asking, What are the new bandwagons, and where do we hop on?

After two years of the commission process I have come to realize that for museums bandwagons are neither the question nor the solution. The basic question for the new century has, I believe, become quite clear. It is, In a society where so much is changing, how can we ensure that museums *do not change* in any basic way?

The essence of the museum enterprise is to give us a view of the past, a view of man's achievements, of his diversity and of the world in which we live and in which we evolved. Museums are the bridge between the past and the future. Such a mission requires a commitment to preservation and conservation; stability is a necessity if museums are to serve society.

The commission report, then, does not provide startling new visions, nor does it chart new terrain. Rather it offers an outline and a series of recommendations for ensuring that museums reach the new century in good health as stable, understood and respected centers of wonderment and of knowledge.



Mildred S. Compton

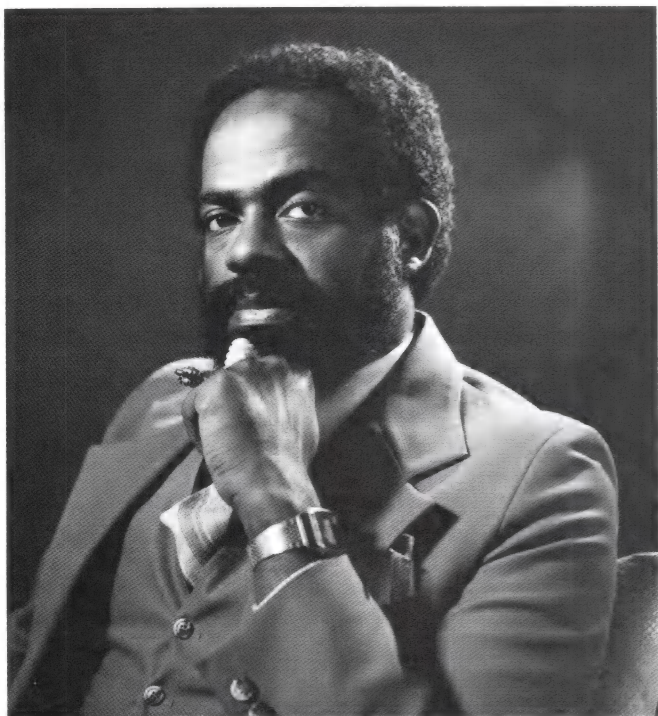
Serving on the Commission on Museums for a New Century was an exciting and stimulating experience for me. Working in the smaller subcommittees and being a part of the informative discussions during full commission meetings were both enlightening.

I had serious misgivings about the commission before the meetings began, and to some degree, the same misgivings were there after the first meeting in January 1982. My apprehension concerned our ability to avoid becoming mired in current problems of museum operation and in hunting for new solutions to current needs. I was apprehensive that our report would be an updated version of the Belmont Report. Those preconceptions were altered as the open, frank dialogue progressed. To listen to and to discuss subjects with recognized authorities representing

the diversity in museums, and to see a consensus develop for subject areas that warranted inclusion in the report, made me realize that this was a new and exciting endeavor.

We identified current problems and weaknesses in museum operations as a first step in planning for possible new methods and procedures to overcome those problem areas. We identified the strengths in American museums: their collective treasures, their capable personnel and their great contributions. For years museums have justified their existence by stating that they were preserving artifacts for future generations; but rarely had any museum gone beyond that statement to examine and articulate the many other contributions they were capable of making to the future.

To me, the most important aspects of my experience as a member of the commission were being exposed to futurists, learning the procedures for identifying trends and measuring their implications for museums and realizing that long-range planning need not be just speculation. In planning our future, there will be choices and options that demand our participation. Fortified with knowledge and information, the community of museums in America will more than meet those challenges in the future. Even in retirement, I feel excited, optimistic and challenged.



Edmund Barry Gaither

I was delighted and honored to be invited to serve on the Commission on Museums for a New Century because —beyond the professional recognition—it afforded an opportunity to help define a future direction for a cluster of institutions that I love and regard as vital to the social cement of society. Moreover, it provided additional opportunity to assure that the interest of minority museums would be folded into that of museums at large, and that

their unique role and contribution—as well as their survival—would be acknowledged and supported.

Minority museums are both small and few and run the risk of being easily overlooked—or even undervalued—when discussed in the context of the giants of the field. Yet even the most cursory reading of the statistical projections for America's immediate future convinces one of the great importance of minorities in America.

Minorities in America have a dual yet all-encompassing role in the social and cultural picture. They will themselves be celebrating their unique history and heritage while taking the leading role in advancing understanding and appreciation of the same. But they will also be Americans sharing fully in the overall interplay of American economic, cultural and political institutions. Within our field minorities will need to strengthen museums that address their specific heritages and, at the same time, participate in other museums. Americans need to understand this vital set of relationships as fundamental to the working of a pluralistic society.

Within the structure of the commission, I have sought to assure that we affirm the integrity of minority museums, recognizing their very important place in American life. This affirmation does not release other museums from their obligations to be pluralistic in their programs, staffs and boards. I sought also to assure that the printed report would provide concepts and language useful to minority museums in making and presenting a case for themselves in financial and political sectors. After all, the report should not only help chart a direction for the next decades; it should also help museums find and harvest resources that are needed now in order to move into the future.



Richard Lyman

The most striking thing that I have learned from participating in the commission process is how little anyone knows about the museum community as a whole. Statistics of attendance, costs, sources of

income — everything — appear to be based on flimsy grounds, easily toppled into uncertainty at the slightest push. To make its case effectively in years to come, the museum world will need all manner of facts that are not now obtainable. I hope the commission's calling attention to this will be helpful.

I began my work with the commission by thinking that we were mainly going to update the Belmont Report. I found some of our efforts to probe the 21st century not specially useful. There is no reason to believe that we are a group of superwise pundits, uniquely able to clear up mysteries of prophecy, and at times I felt we might become junior partners to *Megatrends*. I liked it best when we stuck to things we knew more about, as for the most part we did.

In some ways, I've made a nuisance of myself on the commission, pointing out that there is hardly anyone on it who is not a museum director or former director. Partly this comes about as a result of tragic losses: Nancy Hanks, Mamie Clark. But it would have been wise to have more nonmuseum members to remind the majority that the world may look somewhat different to people quite outside the museum profession. Since I'm not a museum director, I've sometimes felt like the Ancient Mariner who "stoppeth one of three" — or perhaps even like the albatross itself.

I hope that the progress of the museum community toward getting itself organized will continue—it has been quite remarkable to date — and will eventually produce both a sense of community and an appreciation of diversity suitable to the realities of a sector of American cultural life that occupies a more important place in society than its own members entirely realize.



Robert R. Macdonald

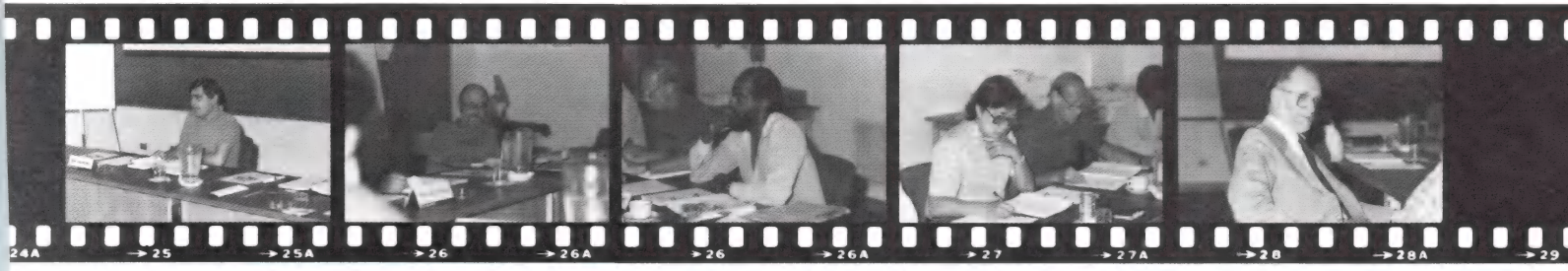
J Bronowski wrote in *The Ascent of Man*, "Man ascends by discovering the fullness of his own gifts (his talents and faculties), and what he creates on the way are monuments to the stages of his understanding of na-

ture and self — what the poet W. B. Yeats called 'monuments of unaging intellect.'" The work of the Commission on Museums for a New Century has illuminated the vital and continuing role of museums as "monuments of unaging intellect." In the voluminous readings supplied to the commission members, in the information developed at public hearings and professional colloquia and in the dialogue among the members of the commission and their colleagues, the message became clear. The traditional museum functions of collecting, preserving and presenting the products of man and nature continue to meet a basic and historic need. It is the need for a civilizing sense of self as members of the human community living in a man-made and natural world.

The commission members also came to appreciate the diversity of the world in which we seek that sense of self and community. The strength of American museums is in their reflection of that diversity. Commission members were continually reminded that Americans are the great museum makers of human history. The United States has by far more museums per capita than any other nation in the world. We have museums of history, art, natural history, science and technology. We have great zoos and significant botanical gardens. Our museums include major research centers and active community centers. There are children's museums, ethnic museums, museums of music, dance, fashion, photography and space. There are museums with staffs in the hundreds and museums manned by one dedicated volunteer. There are museums located in grand, architectural monuments and museums found in small, wooden sheds along back roads. We have museums that collect great art and museums that collect political buttons. Our museums preserve millions of plant specimens, wedding dresses, historic documents and nails. It can be said, "You name it, Americans have a museum for it."

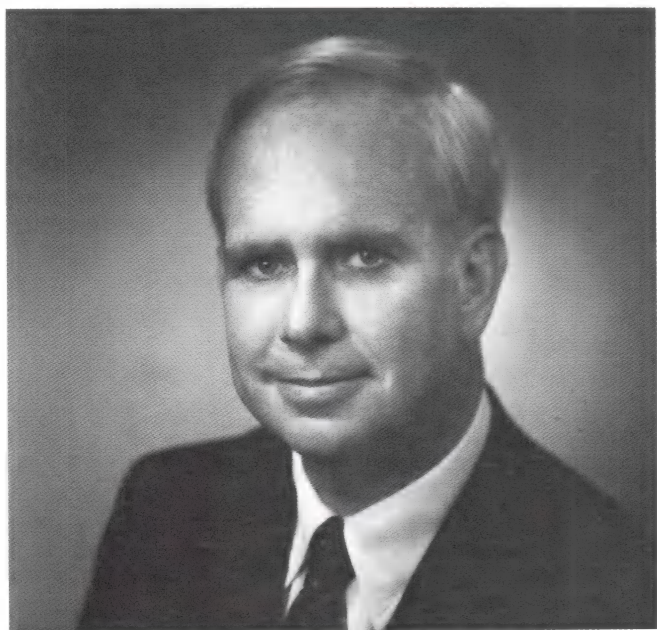
In its work the commission was able to find a common denominator among America's museum diversity. American museums, like their predecessors, collect and hold the "real thing." It is the "thing" that museums collect that makes them unique and significant elements in American society. There are other institutions that educate and entertain. But it is the museum that collects and preserves the tangible evidence that elicits thoughts of self and community. The members of the commission continued to return to the realization that, at their core, American museums pursue a tradition as ancient as human society.

While realizing the continuity of American museums with the past, the commission also came to appreciate the different and challenging responsibilities of museums in a pluralistic and highly technical, democratic society. The public view of the importance of museums to that society is indicated in the increasing numbers of citizens who visit them. That public expects museums to be more than collectors and conservers. By tradition, American museums are required to be effective, learning resources for the communities they were established to serve. It is clear that museums need to understand their communities better. We must apply the best techniques in translating the learning values of our collections to the diverse audiences that



come to us. To meet the traditional responsibilities to collect and preserve, American museums must be innovative in securing financial support and improve the efficiency of our collections and financial management. But the commission members became painfully aware that in the frantic effort to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, too many of us are neglecting our primary responsibility to protect our most valuable asset, the collection.

It was a consensus among the members of the commission that our goal is to present ideas and alternatives to museums and the publics they serve. It is our hope that the commission's report will provide an outline of our history, our current condition and what museums can be in the future. We realize that the commission's report may disappoint some and be outdated as soon as it is printed. But I feel that the process of the commission's work has strengthened the collegiality among American museums and renewed our shared commitment to serve the American community as irreplaceable instruments in the ascent of man.



Peter H. Raven

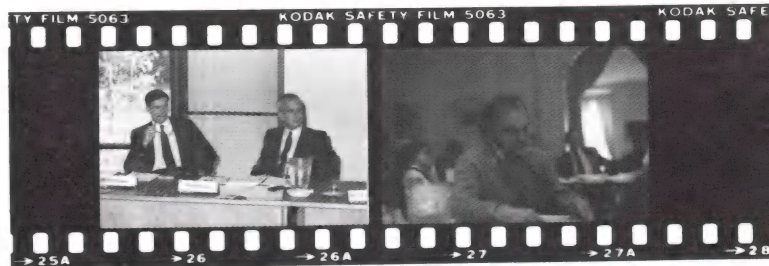
Working as a member of the Commission on Museums for a New Century has given me a new awareness of the tremendous vitality and diversity of our nation's museums, and of their problems and opportunities. Conservation and education, the two themes emphasized in the legislation establishing the Institute of Museum Services, concern all museums and will do so as long as institutions of this kind exist.

Conservation of what we have is of paramount importance if museums are to fulfill the trust we all place in them. The enormity of the job to be done, however, becomes apparent only when we consider museums as a whole, with their enormous and diverse holdings. In the case of the natural world, we live in an age of unprecedented extinction, so that the museums that hold samples of organisms—either living or preserved—have acquired heavy new responsibilities that will become more and more evident during the course of the next century.

Closely linked with conservation is the matter of collecting, especially in the area of contemporary life. Not only must we effectively preserve the millions of objects that have come to us from the past, but we must devise an effective national plan for dealing with the culture of the present, conserving for future scholars and students representative examples of all aspects of the things that concern us now. Museum professionals must cooperate in formulating plans that will allow us to do this well. It is a problem that affects large and small museums, local museums, ethnic museums—museums of all kinds. The process is one that will enrich our national life by helping us to celebrate our richness and diversity.

Education, on the other hand, has emerged as a process too precious for us all to hand over to the educators. We must work with them to ensure that the concepts and values that museums represent will remain an important part of our national experience. Engaging the private sector, local government and concerned citizens in the process will strengthen the potential contribution of museums greatly and allow them to be of even greater service in the new century than has been possible until now.

Americans now have a past—a tradition—of which they can be proud and from which we all have much to learn. My work on the commission has reaffirmed for me the power of the museum idea, which translates the values of the past into the terms of the present, and by doing so helps enhance the opportunities of the future. We have much to be thankful for in contemplating the strong and positive role that museums will continue to play. Δ



What Museums Are Good For

Rudolph H. Weingartner

A Boy Scout troop can meet conveniently under the sponsorship of the town's historical museum; the lecture hall of its art museum might readily house a stimulating course on Hindu thought. But is that what museums are for? One can poke holes into the soil passably well with a Phillips screwdriver and thus plant seeds at the right depth; that tool will also do if one lacks an icepick. It is fairly difficult, though, to find a substitute when a Phillips screwdriver is needed to do what only it can do. Many implements can be put to numerous uses, but most have characteristics that make them especially capable of performing functions that are distinctively theirs. That distinctiveness confers a special value on an object.

Museums are vastly more complex than manufactured tools. Still, a look at the characteristics and functions that are peculiarly theirs will yield a better understanding of what museums are good for.

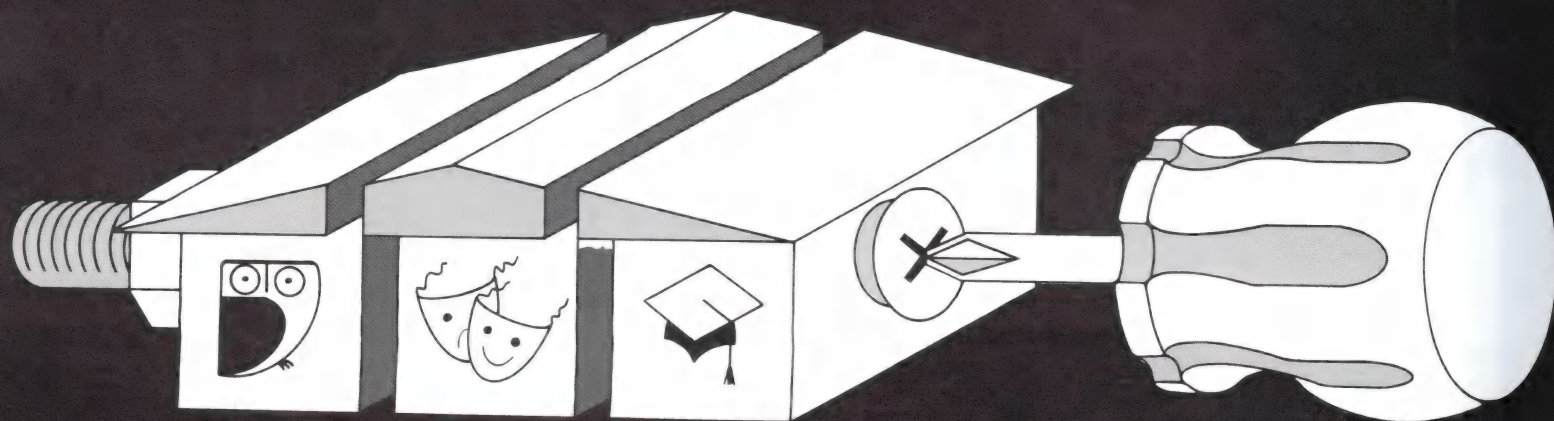
What do museums in fact have in common, considering

RUDOLPH H. WEINGARTNER is dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and professor of philosophy at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. He was an invited participant in the open forum on "The Museum in Society," sponsored by the Commission on Museums for a New Century in New York, January 1983.

the immense differences among the great palaces that are devoted to works of art, the modest rooms occasionally set aside for displays of the history of brewing or printing, rooms that exhibit skeletons of prehistoric animals and rooms that display regional costumes of 19th-century Croatia? All such museums house *objects*, collections of real things, pertaining to some given domain or theme. Principles of coherence of collections may be numerous and tenuous; but it always matters to museums that their holdings are as real as the physical things in one's own home. The imitations one finds in some museums, the reproductions, the models, prove this rule, since immense care is taken to create verisimilitude.* The common distinctive characteristic of museums, then, is their role as keepers of actual physical objects — not of descriptions or depictions of objects — that prior to their imprisonment had careers outside museum walls.

With this in mind, we will learn more about what museums are good for if we imagine a world in which one would not expect to find them. The 16th-century French village to which Martin Guerre returned surely is such a place. Every painting known to the villagers looked more or less like a Breughel; one person's experience with natural objects and artifacts was hardly distinguishable from another's; every villager had essentially equal access to the mysteries of the crafts and trades. Distant lands with different dress, weapons, implements, houses, flora and fauna, and customs were at best dimly known to exist. Nor was there genuine access to a past different from the 16th-century present. What point, then, would there have been to single out a set of special objects for contemplation by the villagers? No more than converting one's own living room, today, indistinguishable from one's neighbor's, into a museum. There may have been an exception in the village of Martin Guerre, but it, too, would prove the rule: a cabinet of curios in the richest man's house; the hairs and bones of a local saint in the church's reliquary.

*A museum of scale models of railroads is not a railroad museum; it is known as a museum of model railroads: a museum of *real models*, not of surrogate locomotives and cars.



In the world in which there are museums, life experiences differ from each other, depending on where and when people live, on their occupations, roles and stations. Museums, in this familiar world, bring us into the presence of objects that belong to lives different from ours and give us an opportunity to become directly acquainted with them.

When we read accounts or see depictions of other times and places, our knowledge is extended beyond our own experience. The words we read and the pictures we see convey to us something of what those places, distant in time and space, are like. But when we are brought into the presence of actual objects, our own experience is extended more directly than it is by description or picturing. Hence the importance of authenticity. Only real things will really stretch our experience. Authenticity, therefore, becomes *more* important, not less, in a world that has become even better at simulating and reproducing with remarkable verisimilitude natural objects, artifacts and even works of art.

On this account, the distinctive trait of a museum is to be a repository of authentic objects from different times, places and domains. But what, then, is the function of museums? What is the point of our direct encounter with the things they house? Three broad, interrelated functions seem to me distinctive of museums, granted that there is as much variety within them as there are different types of museums. I distinguish a scholarly mission, an entertainment function and an educative one.

To get a sense of the scholarly importance of museum collections requires understanding the role of firsthand experience in scholarship generally. Anthropological inquiry, to take an example, rests on direct observation. Typically, anthropologists live with the people they study and write about. Historians, who cannot travel in time, must work with reports about the past, especially accounts contemporary with their subject matter. More important still are primary sources — the actual traces left by the past, whether in the form of documents, artifacts or buildings. Art historians are notoriously dependent in their work on the physical survival of the objects of their concern, with copies or reproductions largely unavailable until the invention of photography and related techniques and still inadequate for serious scholarship.

How museum collections support scholarly pursuits like these is quite obvious. Archeological and anthropological collections extend the range of a field worker's experience. Museums of many different kinds offer precisely the repositories of different kinds of spoors of the past that constitute the primary evidence for the constructing of historical inference chains. Without art museums art history, as that discipline is conducted, would be unthinkable.

A visit to a museum, with magnifying glass, measuring devices and other instruments of examination, is in many ways not as good as being on the scene itself. On the other hand, a museum also improves on original situations be-



cause it offers to a scholar a coherent collection of objects otherwise temporally and spatially scattered. But in any case, direct encounters with authentic objects belonging to the experience of other lives are a powerful and necessary supplement to the paler evidence of reports.

Entertainment of a certain kind is a quite different function of museums. While I hesitate to use that word (for fear of being thought frivolous), it is surely justified, assuming Mozart divertimenti are properly so-called and that we are entertained when we see *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In a similar way, a visit to a museum can be amusement, an occasion of pleasure.

We want to be sure about two characteristics of this entertainment associated with museums. First, like any real entertainment, it must be enjoyable in itself. Whatever we may learn from a visit to a museum (or whatever other

desirable consequences that occasion may have), we are talking about the experience of looking at a museum display insofar as it is itself pleasurable. Second, we must insist that the only pleasure which is here relevant is one that has its source in the collections of museums; only entertainment with roots in what properly belongs to museums is distinctive of those institutions.

Many different kinds of enjoyment may of course be derived from the objects exhibited in museums. Esthetic pleasure having its origin in looking at the paintings and sculptures of an art museum is a clear example, though such pleasure need not only stem from what is conventionally referred to as "art." Esthetic pleasure, or something very akin to it, also has its source in works of craft. Take beautiful Indian baskets or gorgeous ceremonial

The common distinctive characteristic of museums...is their role as keepers of actual physical objects—not of descriptions or depictions of objects—that prior to their imprisonment had careers outside museum walls.

robes, but also vintage automobiles or gleaming models of 19th-century steam engines. Very similar responses may be evoked by objects of nature, such as in displays of the plumage of tropical birds or collections of semiprecious stones.

Indeed, things need not be beautiful or even pretty to be ingredients in an experience that is valued for its own sake. (Is *King Lear* beautiful? Picasso's *Guernica*!) We prize the interestingness of things, for example, their startling differentness from the familiar; we enjoy quaintness. Perhaps such values are not near the top of the moralist's scale, but they certainly play an important role in our lives and they are an ingredient in the entertainment function of museums.

The third function of a museum is educative. With it, that institution has its broadest social impact. I want briefly to look at some different ways in which museums educate, while remembering throughout that all museum learning must be characterized by the presence of authentic objects.

Visits to museums teach us quite specific things. We say about this unproblematic sense of "education" that, as we peruse an exhibit, we acquire information about some segment of the past: about an industrial process, about the art of medieval Siena or about the festive dresses of Scottish Highlanders. But that repeated "about" is misleading. Books give information about their subject matter; discourse refers, is *about*, things. Museums, instead, make us *acquainted* with things, so that we get to know those objects, rather than just learn about them. While we infer



information from our viewings and derive it directly from labels and explanatory materials, the special quality of this learning resides in the directness of our experience.

Museums also educate in a broader sense, although that sense assumes and includes the specific function just mentioned. Because in museums we are confronted by objects that are especially collected and selected for display, the direct experience of which I spoke is not readily found outside museum walls. A visit to a museum, when it works well, is like a voyage into different times or places, or even like a trip into regions that are subdivisions of a conceptual map rather than a geographic one. Like real travel, such experiences can stretch the mind and enlarge the imagination by acquainting us with possibilities that lie beyond our own time- and place-bound experiences. If travel is educational, so are visits to museums.

The educative function of museums can help combat two all-too-familiar responses to the perception of real differences in the world, whether in dress or custom, moral values or ways of conducting daily life, or artistic styles.

One such response is provincial: supposing that what is different from the familiar is to be dismissed or even scorned. Museums can help, literally, to open our eyes and give us a bit of precisely that direct experience which creates familiarity and thus contributes to that understanding of differences which leads to appreciation.

Museums can help in combating a second, more modern, conventional response to differences: call it mindless cosmopolitanism. This attitude takes everything to be equally good and finds no differences of value in the immense variety of customs, modes of life and styles that have been generated by a world that never stays the same.

Our discussion has moved us into the broader aspect of education that we might call the inculcation of taste. Because managing successfully in a postindustrial society calls for a great deal of information and for a goodly number of complex intellectual skills, we think that all education must produce such results. But in the daily choices we make in moral, political and esthetic matters, we reflect both the values we have acquired and our ability to discriminate, judge and evaluate. Making judgments and evaluations, too, is something that is learned, so that education is relevant to this formation of taste in the broad sense.

Here again, museums are relevant. Taste is acquired in the experiencing of objects, whether wines or paintings,

and not simply by means of discourse *about* things and situations. The role of art museums is obvious in a person's acquisition of taste in works of art; but the numerous other worlds that are opened up to the museum visitor can play a similar role in our ability to discriminate, assess and judge. The museum helps to form taste, because it is only once-removed from an unfettered world and can thus play a significant role in the shaping of our evaluative faculties.

The distinctive role of museums, I have said, consists of the interrelated functions of particular kinds of scholarship, entertainment and education. A number of things follow about what museums should be doing if they are to play their roles well.

First, they should undertake those things that will support an appropriate form of scholarship. Here the most fundamental task is to collect in a systematic way the objects that belong to the museum's domain—paintings, fossils, printing presses or whatever. Without collections, a museum is nothing. But pack rats are not yet curators. To build a collection requires a viewpoint as to what does and does not matter. Collecting *itself* is a scholarly activity. Astute selection of objects belonging to a domain can itself make important contributions to knowledge and insight.

What is collected must be preserved. The maintenance, repair, restoration and housing of collections call for more care and feeding than are needed by thoroughbred



horses. There is no point in collecting, if these jobs are not well done.

If a museum's collection is to be of use to scholars within or outside the museum, yet another set of handmaidenly activities (that are themselves scholarly) are required. The notion of a collection not only implies principles of coherence; access to it presupposes order. A heap, however well its components were selected, does not support scholarship, and shrewd juxtaposition provides more insight than mere mechanical exposition. But even an ordered collection can be more or less intelligible. This is where the complex job of identifying, labeling and cataloging comes in: the basic and necessary scholarly activities of museums. If museums do not perform them, they are not likely to be performed at all.

The second function of museums I have singled out is entertainment, with the pleasure provided by the museum's collections. The basic museum activity relevant here is exhibiting. Well-designed exhibits make a museum's objects attractive to the public—the notion of design covering everything from the very conception of an exhibit and the selection of the objects to be displayed, to placement, lighting and labeling. Without attractive packaging, the public—which lavishes only short spurts of time on museum collections—will not be entertained.

Museums, I believe, are right to cater to the public and to mount pleasantly or even dramatically designed exhibits of their wares. They should remember, however, that the functions of entertaining and educating overlap. It is far better to amuse with a display that also fulfills a higher teaching role than by means of one whose educational role is trivial.

The entertainment function of museums can be a trap, because it is all too easy to forget the *museum* in that formula. Then, as elsewhere in the entertainment indus-

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try, the clicks of the turnstile become the measure of success: magicians, comedians or chefs for the eye or tongue become the magnet that makes those turnstiles move. When this happens, museums find themselves in futile competition with entertainers who are much more skilled and far better paid, while at the same time they arouse expectations in the public that make it ever harder for them to return to their own mission.

The educational function of museums is the broadest, since it encompasses the other two. It is also the primary concern of many of the professionals who staff museums, as well as of the institutions, public and private, which



support them. That educative function, I have said, consists of informing and enlightening by means of the museum collections. Another quick look is needed at the special character of this transaction, if we are to see what needs to be done to have the educative function performed well.

The objects themselves, I repeat, should educate by having the learner become directly acquainted with them. This special character of education in the museum is also the source of a weakness. Things do not speak for themselves; they must have a spokesman, they must be referred to in discourse. Two poles of a continuum might thus be characterized, neither pole describing the educational activity of a museum. One end consists of a heap of objects that, however well collected, remains unintelligible and therefore cannot educate. At the opposite pole is pure discourse. It is intelligible and thus informs and teaches, but because it does not provide direct experience of objects, such discourse is not an education that is distinctive of museums.

The educational activities of museums lie between these two poles. We move away from the pole of incomprehensibility by introducing not only coherent ordering of objects, but also labeling and explanatory phrases—the guideposts that permit us to derive understanding from objects. Things don't mean, discourse does. An exhibit that educates uses words to release the power of things by having us come to know just what we are becoming acquainted with.

As we move further toward the pole of discourse, we



reach the exhibition catalog, on the one hand, and the docent's lecture, on the other. Both are discourse that refers to, and is illustrated by, the real objects that are part of the basic world of the museum.

But this way of looking at the educational functions of museums suggests an entire area that at this time remains sadly underdeveloped. Our museums reverberate with the noise made by crowds of children from primary schools, led from display to display by their teachers or members of the museum's staff. These goings-on can readily be located on our continuum: words illustrated by objects; objects informed by a meaning provided by a discourse that explains and links them. But why is this valuable activity arrested barely above the level of sixth grade? It would seem that the educative activity most central to museums is to have their collections play a role in *all* of education, but especially in learning in secondary school and undergraduate study, as well as in the specialized pursuits of graduate work. What we take for granted about libraries—that they must be integrated into all facets and levels of education—is equally appropriate for museums, or at least for many of them.

The educational programs of museums all too often ignore the distinctiveness of their role. Frequently, their lectures and courses are merely more or less adequate imitations of those properly developed in educational institutions of various levels. To the extent that museums mount educational programs that are indistinguishable from those of other institutions, they divert energies and re-

sources from their proper educational mission, and to that degree leave this distinctive function unperformed.

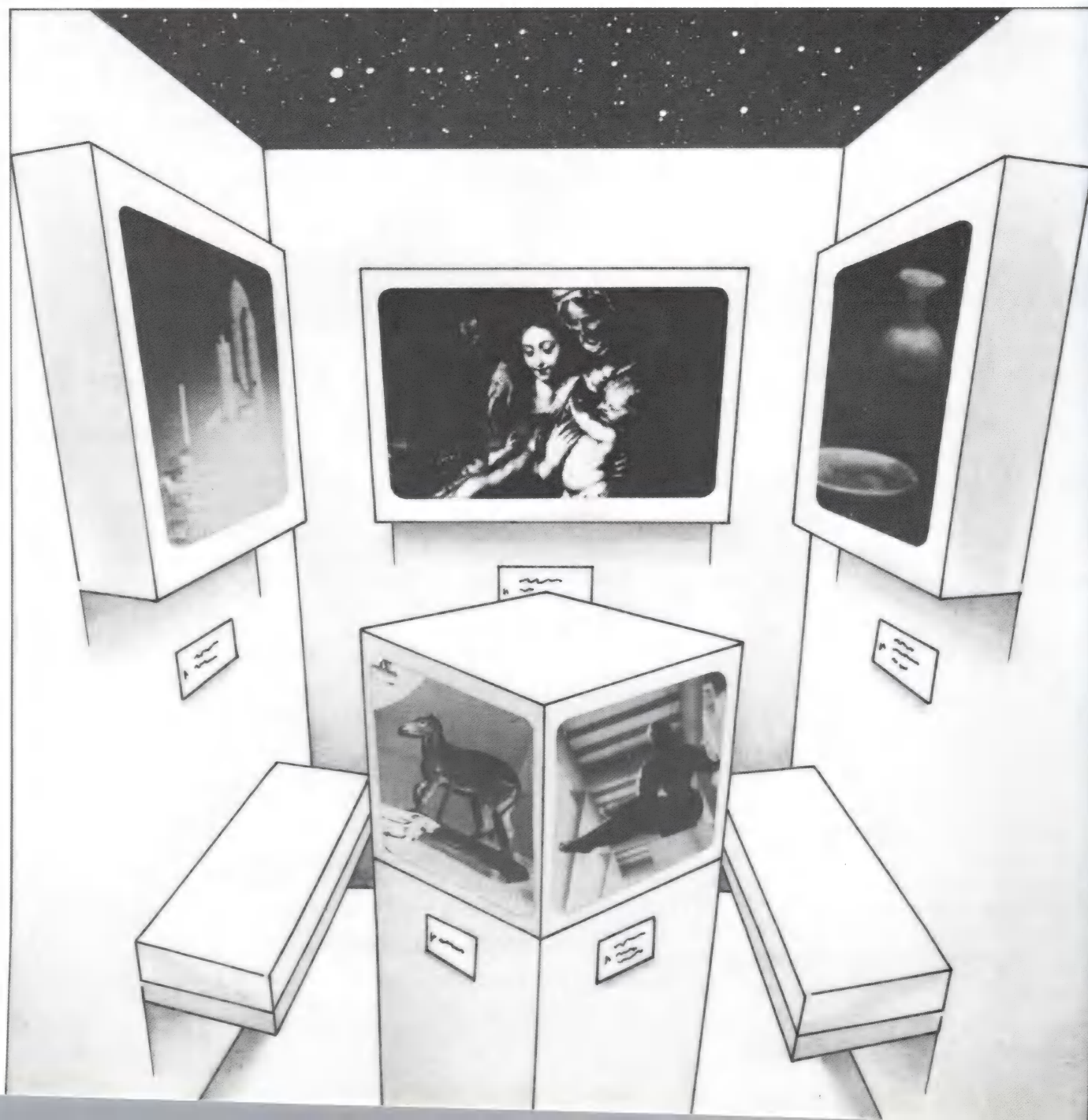
Conventional education is very word-dependent, and conventional educators seldom have the ability and training to break far out of the web of discourse. It is in the world of museums that we find persons who have the knack of teasing information out of things, who know how to marry discourse and direct experience of physical objects. We are dependent on the staffs of museums to take the initiative in making acquaintance with objects of nature and artifacts a more important part of education at all of its levels. Such integration is at the center of the distinctive educative function of museums.

Museums are not as unitary in their distinctive mission as Phillips screwdrivers: there are many things that *only* museums can do or that only museums can do reasonably well. Nevertheless, there are limits to the proper function of museums, and straying beyond them exacts its price. Chopping ice with that screwdriver mars its blades. The pursuit of irrelevant goals hampers the effectiveness of museums. The issue of resource allocation is clear: what is devoted to the peripheral is not there to be spent on the central, and an important function remains unperformed. More subtly, confusion within the museum infects a broader public outside it and fosters the belief that nothing of value is distinctive of that institution, that others can readily do what it does. What museums are good for is important. Reflecting on that mission may help the better to fulfill it. Δ

The Future and Museums

Joseph F. Coates

Prospects for museums have never been better, or their future more exciting, diverse and prosperous. In contrast, the administrative apparatus of museums is locked into a perpetual crisis mentality over funding, patronage, ups and downs in government support, expanding collections, costs of operation and lagging maintenance. This nearly universal focus of museum managers is only natural, but it casts a pall of pessimism over the intrinsically expansive future of museums. We ought not let that pall obscure the vision of the future museum with its wider scope and purpose and new technological base. In this essay we shall look at several of the forces for change that will shape museums, and should encourage them, over the next several decades.



Forces for Change

The broadest and most powerful forces shaping the future of museums are affecting many institutions. For example, the rising level of education and the continuing economic prosperity of the nation assure growing interest in the substance and function of museums and the availability of resources (albeit by a variety of uncertain routes) for expansion in depth, scope and accessibility. The rise in ethnicity as an explicit, positive, self-conscious attention to origins, coupled with a growing sense of national history and the accompanying preservation movement, is widening the historical and cultural base for museums. The preservation movement grows out of a search for roots and an expanding commitment to amenities. It is also linked to environmental and conservation movements. The rise in the expectations and demands for better, higher quality artifacts and amenities in our lives is an obvious consequence of education, prosperity and the growing awareness of the shortfalls and failures of the ephemeral and the second rate. For millions of Americans, quality is replacing quantity as the focus of personal development. This is reflected in a search for models. Hence an appeal of museums—the storehouse of models.

The globalization of the U.S. economy is accompanied by globalization of our culture and recreation. Americans have voluntarily and involuntarily explored the face of the globe as tourists, students, soldiers and sailors, and as agents and representatives of multinational corporations. Complementing that American outreach is the continuing influx of new Americans. The current flow of Latin Americans, East Africans, East Asians, Middle Easterners, Africans, South Asians and Japanese into our country guarantees new interests, new products and designs, new cultural awareness and new business for museums.

The large corporation with its associated concerns for public relations and goodwill and its sheer enormity of assets has become a positive factor in museum life. Philip Morris, for example, at this writing was simultaneously covering its bets in sponsoring the 38th Corcoran Biennial of American Painting, *Paintings of the South, 1564–1980* and *The Precious Legacy: Judaic Treasures from the Czechoslovak State Collections*. So much for culture in the service of public relations. While this involvement is desirable, it also illustrates a characteristic of corporate support — safe, bland and unimaginative, the fact that many have found *The Precious Legacy* profoundly moving notwithstanding. That may change, of course, when museum administrators recognize that the corporations of

the world need culture more than culture needs corporate support. Traditional problems of the possession or disposal of wealth while retaining control, and the desire to leave a positive legacy, form a complex network of interaction with federal tax policies, an important matter shaping the museum world.

The Implications

To treat systematically these and other forces for change shaping the future of museums would require more detail than space permits. We would want to identify the elements that make up the cultural, social and institutional system of museums, teasing out each element from buildings to sites to collections to clientele. We would define the numerous constituencies of museums ranging from users and patrons to public and private sponsors, to students, staff, volunteers, universities, local and national businesses and so on, and identify them with regard to each of these factors and the forces shaping the future. Assuming we have done this, let us pass now to some of the implications such an exercise would suggest.

The Museum Utility

Major museums, notably the Smithsonian, are becoming multifaceted organizations with shops, stores, tours, courses, first-class national publications and book series and multidisciplinary research resources. Sheer size and diversity make them museum utilities. Their bounty, scope and assets set the standard for imitation by others and make them testing grounds for the evaluation and exploration of new concepts.

The concept of the museum utility will expand to many regions of the country and, in the long pull, lead to a national and international network of museums, sharing, exchanging, testing and evaluating more vigorously, more dynamically and more positively their collective roles. For example, one might well anticipate a national or global museum ticket, a museum membership giving access and perquisites anywhere in the world. The museum utility will spin off systematic and comprehensive borrowing and lending services for other museums and eventually be able to tailor and put forward an ephemeral museum for an event, for lease or hire. Already the global tour and the mobile museum exhibit, if not commonplace, are at least frequent occurrences.

The Telemated Museum

Telematics — the technology of telecommunications and computers — is the area of technology that will have the greatest impact on museums. Telematics will surely affect the organization and management of museums. It will permit new refinements in inventory control and in the sorting, exchange and preservation of collections. Telecommunications and computers will help museums make

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the best use of national and world museum assets.

A computer in the museum will store a characterization of each holding, perhaps noting as many as 20 or 100 features, like period, source, artist, theme, materials and use. With such detailed data the museum will have enormous flexibility in sorting its collection and in calling up particular artifacts to complement or augment major exhibition themes. The ability to provide detailed data will, of course, also influence the opportunities for and the likelihood of sharing and exchanging materials and finding lost artifacts.

Even more dramatic, telematics will radically transform the purpose, kinds and use of museum displays. Today museum goers enthusiastic about the content of exhibits are sometimes frustrated in their attempt to go beyond the superficial examination of an artifact or work of art, to find linkages to context and background, history and cultural relationships. This kind of information simply cannot be presented on the awkwardly placed, virtually unreadable, 5-by-8-inch note cards adjacent to an exhibit. The headphone delivery of lectures is one step toward remedying this situation. But headphones are a mere foretaste of what the future holds. The exhibit areas of tomorrow may be equipped with the capability for in-depth call-up of related information. Each exhibition hall might become a microcosm — a total museum — providing the viewer with cultural, social, historical and biographical context. At the mere press of a button—the electronic docent—the visitor could choose audiovisual displays providing detail and depth. Telecommunications may permit the enthusiast to determine where else in the city, the state, the country or the world related exhibits or artifacts exist—sites to visit, places to go. And it will be practical, not merely possible, to call up audiovisual, digitally stored archives and collateral detail from these sites and places at each viewing station in the museum.

Telecommunications and computers may make possible a museum of the performing arts, in which animated dioramas, half- or full-scale animated mannequins, would recreate classic performances or cultural activities—a Nigerian opera, a Cree burial ceremony or an 18th-century ballet. Unheard-of things will become practical—one might, for example, call up and compare the same passages from Beethoven's Ninth, as played by 20 different orchestras, all in about half an hour. Or one might be able to compare 5,000 Impressionist paintings from the comfort of a gallery or studio. Imagine being able to call up the depiction of eyes, or hands, as treated throughout the entire career of a single artist, or cross-culturally, or, in an exhibit on machines or structures, to see a building being constructed. The process would be carried from beginning to end, at any speed and in any depth of detail the viewer might choose. The ability to select, call up, divide and compare presents an unprecedented opportunity for study of both the performing and the creative arts.

The "Hands-On" Museum

The Exploratorium in San Francisco, the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago and the Please Touch Museum and Franklin Institute Science Museum in Philadelphia are today known for their fine "touch and handle" museum displays, but the idea of "hands-on" exhibits has been around for a while. Transient exhibits at world's fairs early experimented in the form. The trend toward museum exhibits as total physical, psychological and sensory experiences will continue and move from science and technology centers into art museums and cultural collections. Telematics makes it possible to go beyond the limited, generally unsatisfactory printed expositions that accompany so many museum exhibits, and the opportunity to call up multimedia explanations in detail will be particularly effective in the "hands-on" museum.

The "hands-on" aspects of exhibitions will also expand in many directions as museums more directly integrate themselves as recreational activities in community life. For example, suppose one were seeing a museum exhibit on games or sports. The next step would be an adjacent playing field or game room in which those games or sports could be tried out with real or accurately reproduced artifacts. Or, let's say one were looking at an exhibit of 18th-century kitchen equipment. The next step would be to taste the food prepared according to the original recipes with authentic ingredients and in authentic equipment. Visitors to Colonial Williamsburg can already do just that. There is a further, and inevitable, step: participating in the preparation of that food. This level of "hands-on" participation will be carried out attractively in restored villages where, during the summer, interns may live in an 18th-century building and learn an 18th-century trade like carpentry, woodworking or cabinetry. The "hands-on" museum movement will push museums toward re-creating more complex and complete social, cultural and recreational experiences.

The Community as Museum

One long-term trend is the blurring of many distinctions between museums and other institutions. All cultural and educational institutions are bursting out of their traditional walls. First one sees the stored artifacts, then the semisynthetic and reconstructed and, lately, the natural community as a living museum. Williamsburg, Greenfield Village and Cape May come to mind. Cape May, New Jersey, has one of the largest collections of Victorian homes anywhere in the United States, and through a marvelous combination of local and national policy they are being restored to Victorian elegance while still functioning as living and commercial quarters.

The sense of what a museum is is rapidly changing as individual structures—the Pension Building or the Octagon in Washington, for example—themselves become

museums. And archeological interests are merging with more traditional museum interests. A new interest in industrial sites mitigates against destroying old steel mills, paper mills or machine factories. Preserve the building, restore it to some functioning level and cluster around it the artifacts that would have been there in its heyday. One sees early impulses of this trend in the restoration of industrial villages like the Deserted Village in Allaire State Park, New Jersey, and in the rise of railroad museums.

From the arts point of view, a similar phenomenon is best exemplified by the National Trust system in Great Britain, through which elegant old homes are preserved and maintained. Incidentally, membership in the National Trust gives one access to literally hundreds of historical sites and buildings.

The Private and "Nonce" Museum

Throughout the country there is an explosive growth of quasi-museums, mini-museums and private museums, reflecting our nation's increasing levels of prosperity and education and a keener sense of commercial appeal of museums. Hundreds if not thousands of people have museum quality private collections, ranging from scientific instruments, coins and medallions, to gems, minerals and works of art. The vice-president of the World Bank in Washington, D.C., has a mini-museum in his office, reflecting his 15 years of touring the world.

The "nonce" museums—which is what I call these often private, special purpose or temporary museums that grow out of a single individual's interest—can show up in surprising places. During the course of work on this article I visited Easton, Maryland, where in the storefront of a fabric store more than 50 domestic artifacts from the years 1900 to 1940 are attractively displayed with brief descriptions under the overall theme of "You've come a long way, baby." Twice within one week—once in Atlanta and once in San Francisco—I dined in restaurants decorated by toys. One was owned by the proprietor of a nearby toy museum; in the other the toy collection was for sale. And earlier this year in San Francisco I saw an exhibit in the airport concourse called *A Is for Animals*. Hundreds of carvings, figurines, castings and molds of animals from scores of cultures were on display for no purpose other than the sheer delight of travelers. In another section of the concourse an exhibit of Alaskan native dolls illustrated various ceremonies and practical activities of the Eskimo.

With evidence of the personal zest for collecting so strong, the number of special purpose museums will surely grow. Oak Ridge, Tennessee, boasts the American Museum of Science and Energy. The traveling Bicentennial Museum was a particularly interesting nonce museum, since it moved around the country by rail.

The nonce collections at world's fairs are good testing grounds for new exhibit ideas, as their temporary nature

invites experimentation. At the New York World's Fair in 1939, for example, the General Motors exhibit reversed the usual relationship of visitors to the objects they are viewing. Instead of walking by the exhibit, people were moved along in small, two-person vehicles. Almost surely this technology will be revived in standard museums in the future. Already we have cars that move people past displays in commercial facilities, such as the Hershey chocolate factory in Hershey, Pennsylvania. The monorail, ski lift and similar overview devices are now commonplace at fairgrounds, playgrounds and theme parks.

Large corporations have become patrons of the arts, both collecting and displaying objects in museumlike settings. The Money Museum of Chase Manhattan in New York City and IBM's exhibits on the history of computers, gathered by Charles Eames, are examples of the topical commercial museum. At the same time, the visual arts are breaking out of museum walls and affecting the design, style and color of corporate "artifacts." Atlantic Richfield, for example, puts out its own publication to explain the role of art in its decor, products, packaging and reports. This interest reflects, of course, the larger societal commitment to higher quality and durability. American society is rapidly moving away from the so-called disposable culture of the 1950s to early 1970s, where there seemed to be a single passage from mine to factory to store to consumer to trash heap. We are now a more conserving society, in which the value we put on high quality, durability, performance and amenities grows from our very real needs to conserve energy and materials.

The rise of the special purpose museum is, of course, a trend that complements the development of the museum utility. So one finds a splendid little maritime museum in St. Michaels, Maryland, on the Chesapeake Bay, where "hands-on" exhibits and arts and crafts are presented in the best display formats, together with the so-called back room of the museum, where the repair, maintenance and restoration shop itself is on view.

Some Additional Points

Among the more exciting prospects for the future is the relationship of genetics technology to museums. Eventually biologists will learn to take the genetic material, which is in every cell of every living organism, and re-create—that is, clone—the parent animal or plant. When the scientific and technological breakthroughs occur to make that practical, museums will become the source or bank of this genetic material from extinct species. It is very likely within a decade or two or three that we will have passenger pigeons. It is not unthinkable that cells recovered from the mummy of Tutankhamun will be cloned and he will walk the earth again. Certainly, tissue from mastodons by one or another route will be processed so that a contemporary elephant will be the surrogate mother of a mastodon.

Some speculations not fully sustained by trend data are

worth noting. One is the possibility that the art museum may begin to replace the church as the repository of traditional cultural beauty. On the other hand, some churches are experiencing an exciting revival in architecture, adopting new forms and new materials to their traditional needs.

Another concerns the elitist association of museums. With the opening last spring of the newly renovated Museum of Modern Art, the *Wall Street Journal*, May 2, 1984, carried an amusing article on the 9,180 "important"

people invited to the various inner and not-so-inner sanctums of opening festivities. What was most conspicuous about the list is the apparent absence of ordinary people. So long as museums remain the focus of the stylish largesse of the wealthy, there will always be a brake on their progress toward fully serving the needs of a democratic society. Yet, with so many people classified as "important," the monopoly of the extremely wealthy and the Brahmins on the world of museums seems to be loosening.

Twenty Futurists Look at Museums

J.F. Coates, Inc., enjoys the services of a pool of 100 futurists who volunteer to participate in surveys, workshops and other activities on an *ad hoc* basis. We solicited this group for opinions on four questions:

- What are the three or four principal forces that will shape the future of museums over the next 25 years?
- What principal differences do you look for in museums by the year 2010?
- What principal differences would you like to see between now and 2010?
- How might the definition of "museum" change over the next 25 years?

The responses were full enough in themselves for presentation in this free-standing report.

Forces Shaping Museums

Telematics — telecommunications, computers and related technologies — was identified as a dominant force that would shape the future of museums, along with other new high-tech possibilities, including electronic devices, robots, lasers, electronic medicine, films, video discs, tapes and television. New technologies were forecast as affecting both exhibition techniques and museum operations generally. Advancing technological capabilities will, for example, help museums handle huge masses of people without long lines.

The accelerating rate of technological change will also have its effects. Biotechnology will influence the saving

of genetic materials. Medical developments will affect disease, disability, prevention, treatment and control. Breakthroughs in biology and the medical sciences will be complemented by an increasing public interest in all fields of science and technology. Closely allied is the emergence of the information age.

The increasing value of education was repeatedly noted as the basis for an expanding educational role for museums and an expanding museum clientele. Demographic trends, particularly the increase in the median age, is a related influence here. The move toward lifetime learning for the whole population will affect museums, as will changes in educational methods and the nature of educational institutions. The notion of education is evolving to include not only knowledge about the past and present but about projectable futures. Finally, increasing public enthusiasm for experiential learning was frequently cited as shaping the museums of the future.

The futurists pointed to changing cultural awareness and values. Some saw an increased public interest in our own culture and its traditions; others noted an increase in our sense of cultural relativity. Concern was expressed about the high rate of loss of cultural artifacts, similar to the losses in natural or biological resources. There is a continuing loss of technology, too — of how things are done and how machines work, even for the very recent past. Museums will have a role here.

Funding, financial matters and the availability of resources will be of increasing concern to museums. Some futurists framed the problem as the struggle for funds in the face of expanding missions, the intensification of the preservation movement, larger physical facilities and the high costs of construction and maintenance, the desire for wider public accessibility, the increasing costs of acquisitions, and tax changes and the general state of the economy. Some futurists feared budget cuts for museums if cultural needs must compete with social needs.

Other trends that were noted included an increasing concern for the authentication of works of art; the diminishing supply of first-rate works; the need to secure treasures against crime and terrorism; a growing interest in maintaining a better balance between the old and the new in museums, along with a greater significance attached to heritage; an increase in leisure time for the enjoyment of museums; and a stronger desire on the part of more people for firsthand, interactive and experiential learning rather than more traditional, passive viewer relationships.

The Principal Differences Between Now and 2010

Overwhelmingly, the futurist pool saw a trend away from mere viewing of objects toward the engagement of other senses in events and actions. Museums will become more fully committed to electronics, and museum collections and materials will move into schools and homes. There will be a shift from an object orientation to an information or process orientation.

The experiential aspects of the museum experience of the future were suggested in specific ways. Visitors may

Finally, one must recognize that a full day in a museum, which is what many visitors attempt, can be exhausting, since museums are designed with virtually no attention to human engineering. Inscriptions are often illegible, poorly illuminated or ineptly placed; provisions for sitting while viewing are inadequate. Attention to the elementary ergonomics of the more earthy institutions such as barrooms seem to elude the curatorial mind. Incidentally, bar rails throughout museums would enormously enhance any

visit, since raising one foot a few inches straightens out the spine and relieves stresses on the weakest part of our anatomy, the lower back.

But the pressing demands that face museum managers struggling with the day to day will no doubt put the backs of their visitors far in the background. At the same time, it is safe to say that the future of museums has never been brighter. Were museums stock companies, now would be the time to buy. Δ

participate in the operation of old and new devices; they may drive Model T cars and play 78 rpm phonograph records and help make microchips. Holography will be used to create and re-create scenes; computers will search and call forward information at exhibits and elsewhere. Telematics will become the core technology of museums; but with or without electronics, there will be more "hands-on" exhibits. The futurists anticipate a growing emphasis on technology as opposed to crafts, and increasing attempts to "duplicate" experiences rather than merely explaining or illustrating them. Museum collections will be more movable, or portable. Exhibits will be developed in many languages for travel around the world.

Pluralism and diversification characterized many of the changes the futurists foresaw. Museums will evolve simultaneously in two directions—some will become more specialized, while others will be more broadly based. Some museums may expand to become sites of innovative experiences, and the growing use of participatory exhibits will extend the educational role of museums into both formal and noninstitutional systems. Museums will include minority points of view and different cultural perspectives; the pluralism of our culture will be reflected in types and styles of museums as well as in their exhibits. Museums will be more accessible to more people.

Funding sources will shift, as support from private sources, and from industry and corporations, increases. Some museums will be nearly self-supporting. They will offer a more varied range of services. Museum management will improve with better training for curators, conservators and other staff and the development of a worldwide standardized system for cataloging objects.

What Differences the Futurists Would Like to See

As you might expect, the changes the futurists anticipated were largely the same as those they desired, but they did have a few additional hopes for museums in the future. They'd like to see more compatibility between the physical structures of museums and the land and communities that surround them and a greater emphasis on preservation and designs to facilitate it. They hope museums develop a more effective means of preserving historic artifacts and pay greater attention to security against crime, disasters and other untoward events.

The futurists want a more wide-sweeping interchange of information and more active outreach programs through the use of radio and television. Technology should assist museum staffs to photograph their holdings and accelerate cataloging procedures. Reflecting their own bias, the futurists hope museums will acquire more of an orientation toward the future and develop exhibits demonstrating the latest developments in science and technology.

At the same time, the futurists look to museums to preserve the values and traditions of the past in addition to the artifacts. They hope for stronger community links, better access for more people, a better balance between high art and the folk arts and crafts, and more participatory learning and personalized tours through cassettes, radio and special exhibits.

As for purely human comforts, the futurists hope museums will develop better dining facilities and improved physical layouts. Traffic management should receive more attention, and museums should work to serve families and young children more effectively.

The use of holography for re-creating

historic events and simply for recreation was mentioned repeatedly. One might explore the tomb of King Tut, for example, with interactive video discs. The most extreme wish was for the now-impossible task of recording events through multisensory brainwaves so that they can be played back and experienced in full.

The Definition of Museums 25 Years from Now

Rather than formulate new definitions, the futurists preferred to approach this question by pointing to changing roles and functions. They emphasized that museums should be "living," less dusty and stuffy, less storage oriented and more research oriented. The physical structure will match the content, some of them observed. Museums were described as expanding repositories of all knowledge—as places for living history and generalized learning, as time capsules, as libraries of visual information, as homes where one might search for roots in a rootless society.

Others sensed that museums will become more restricted, housing only ancient items, and that new terminologies will emerge for new institutions that will serve some of the functions museums aspire to today.

The consensus, however, was that the concept of the museum will expand rather than narrow, and that it will come to include recent and real time actions—like today's National Air and Space Museum at the Smithsonian Institution. Some futurists foresaw the growth of the Williamsburg concept; there will be fewer single buildings and more site displays. The museum as a portable and traveling event was frequently noted. And museums will shed their elitist associations as they integrate themselves more fully into the mainstream of American culture.

The High Cost of Quality

Philippe de Montebello

Can art museums maintain high standards of research and publication, as well as quality and seriousness in programming, in the face of severe financial constraints and the need to generate revenues through an accelerated pace of exhibitions of an increasingly popular nature? Are the basic mission and character of museums changing?

I pose these questions at the beginning because I share the concern of many over the growing trend to convert art museums into hyperactive centers and curators into full-time artifact arrangers in order to generate public interest and lure visitors (which improves receipts) as much as to provide pleasure and enlightenment. Naturally, I would prefer to discuss the numerous advances and the many areas of solid growth and development that have taken place in art museums both here and abroad in the last few years. That would serve little purpose though, and fail to recognize the more ominous and darker side, precisely the effects of disproportionate growth in expenses and activities over a relatively short period of time and, in my opinion, the concomitant realignment of priorities they have caused. So I shall not speak of the wondrous. I shall ally myself with Jeremiah and other dour prophets, trusting that my words will meet with a more propitious fate than Cassandra's in Troy.

Escalating costs constitute the most acute problem facing museums today, not just in and of themselves but because, in the quest for a solution to mounting deficits, the gap between standards—the quality to which we aspire—and norms—what we achieve in practice—may be dangerously widened. I refer specifically to standards of research, connoisseurship and thought. In difficult financial times the norm according to which museums operate is pulled down

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by force of compromise imperceptibly, and for that very reason insidiously. If too much time passes without redress, today's norm will become tomorrow's standard.

In art museums, which must stand for uncompromising quality, the depreciation of standards is pernicious, for this must result inevitably in altering the very character of these institutions. Intimations of these changes are emerging now in museums under siege from tight budgets and high public interest, from institutions mounting an unprecedented number of public programs, especially full-scale loan exhibitions, and instituting cost-efficient approaches to the management of their affairs.

Specifically, although the number of people interested in repeat visits to permanent collections in the United States seems relatively stable—and small—a much larger public clamors for loan exhibitions, and museums are delivering them. As a result they find themselves caught in the trap of "success choking on itself" and faced with a set of problems that is as paradoxical as it is unexpected.

It is not simply that exhibitions become more expensive or more difficult to fund (though they do) or that directors and curators will run out of subjects (we won't) or run out of willing lenders (we won't because too many lenders are also eager borrowers). The irony, and the problem, is that most exhibitions are profitable. Usually a museum matches most of its out-of-pocket costs for exhibitions through grants from the public and private sectors. The large crowds that exhibitions attract park in the garage, pay admission, purchase catalogs and posters, and eat in the museum's restaurants. Many take out memberships. Much of this income is profit.



Exhibitions — whose enormous educational and scholarly value is not in question here — give a sense of animation to the institution, and in the long run this liveliness and flow of activities encourage gifts and donations. In the short term the most popular exhibition can generate so much income for a museum that substantial deficits can be erased.

For this reason museums — having exhausted other plausible and legal sources of revenue with the singular exception of operating support from the federal government, which could be substantially increased, and having pared back their staffs as much as is tolerable — are now beginning to view exhibitions as a major ongoing source of income and an essential ingredient in the budgeting process. In other words, a museum's exhibition program now tends to be viewed by the administration as being in the service of the museum's budget — instead of the other way around. Exhibitions are exploited by a formidable business machine in place to make certain that few possible sources of income that can be derived from programs, especially exhibitions, are missed. In effect, then, a museum's commercial and financial divisions exploit, through exhibitions, not just the events, but also more significantly, the whole critical mass of staff and services employed to generate, shape and execute exhibitions — too often to the detriment of the staff's custodial as well as creative functions.

This shift in priorities, therefore, is not only economic, for it filters through the entire staff, affecting its *modus operandi* and its attitudes. Traditional values are upset. Basic museum work — conservation, research, cataloging,

scholarly publications — gives way to the effort that goes into realizing special events with their quantifiable results and to that inescapable preemptive factor, fixed scheduling, which means unyielding deadlines. The time and effort of a museum's curatorial, conservation and administrative staff are displaced from a concern for fundamentals to the support of the special event.

Less obvious, perhaps, is the degree to which another — and not negligible — element is sapped throughout a

Escalating costs constitute the most acute problem facing museums today, not just in and of themselves but because, in the quest for a solution to mounting deficits, the gap between standards...and norms...may be dangerously widened.

museum in the interest of maintaining an exhibition program. I refer to mental and physical energy. It may not be quantifiable, but this type of energy is a distinctly limited currency, easily abused and exhausted. Take the director, turned impresario, for example, and not altogether against his will I hasten to add. The director, anxious to make a mark, is himself an actor on the stage. He must travel often in the service of special projects, but he sees little for sheer delectation or education. He must coordinate and negotiate loans, work out budgets and help raise funds. Those tasks quite naturally can be expected of him. But season after season, should the creation of four-star events be his greatest preoccupation? Shouldn't his energies and thoughts be turned with equal fervor and clarity to such vital concerns as conservation, storage and publications? Inevitably, the disproportionate burden placed on the director by the complex management of an active exhibition program further widens the distance between him and art, between him and the direct apprehension of art. If that gulf does not, at some point, narrow, it is likely over time to reflect upon the quality of thought the director brings to bear in shaping every aspect of a museum's life.

Directors are more and more forced to operate on stored-up experience and knowledge, since they cannot hope to keep up with developments in all fields. Distressing as this may be for a director, who must learn to accept that he is condemned to being miscellaneous, it is even more distressing to see that, increasingly, what he may have to draw upon in his best curators is also stored-up experience and knowledge and, ultimately, too high a dependence on intuition rather than on the up-to-date expertise he should expect. Unfortunately, when curators are put in charge of exhibitions, even though backed by a large support staff, they also must function in a businesslike way, being equally responsible to deadlines and established budgets. Operations meetings become more frequent than visits to the library.

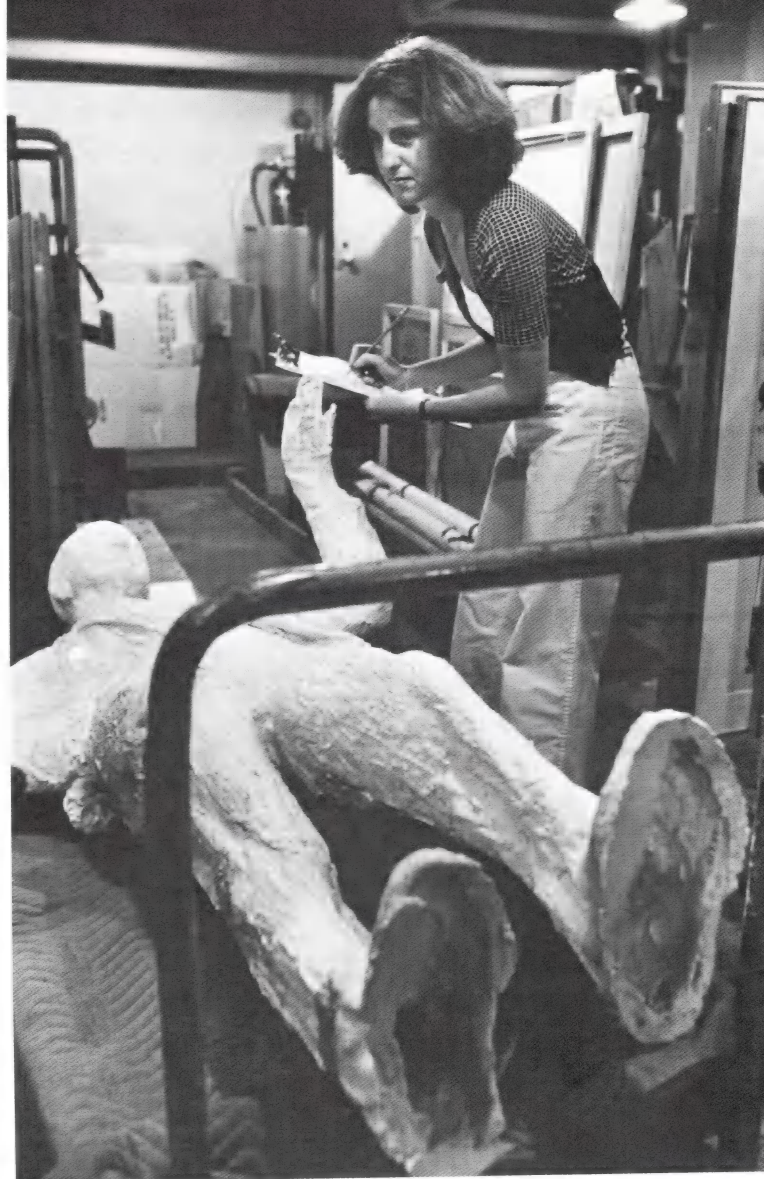
A curator may devote more than a full year of effort on an exhibition. If exhibitions in that area recur with any degree of frequency, that same curator, unable to keep up with his field, may lose the edge he once had—the edge that made him indispensable in the first place. It should be noted that while working on exhibitions, curators are compelled to devote a disproportionate amount of their time and energies not to the collections of which they are the keepers but to works of art that reside elsewhere.

What about younger curators? Aren't museums in danger of creating, in this project-oriented world, a whole generation of curators who, because their duties have denied them sufficient unstructured time for studying and looking, will *not* have their seniors' knowledge or experience in reserve so they can later perform with intelligence and discrimination in more important positions?

Admittedly, museums are now producing young curators who are willing to take on tasks outside their field of specialization, who engage in more practical scholarship and who are more responsive to the general public. However, such unglamorous yet indispensable museum skills as basic cataloging of the collections may either not be learned or not be done. This breed of curators knows a wholly new sense of reward as it thrives on the scent of exciting and challenging exhibitions, but the danger here is in being too far removed from the ivory tower, the view from which still provides the best foundation for productive and original scholarship. The consequences of a program or general activity weighted in favor of temporary exhibitions are felt at all levels of the museum; they redirect the energies of the administrative as well as the curatorial functions. The combined pressures of revenue needs and deadlines make it clear that development offices must structure their time and effort to fund exhibitions. Only then can they turn to, let's say, looking for funding for a gallery renovation that, in truth, *can* wait. At the same time the museum's editors must first tackle the entries for an exhibition catalog, which must be published at the opening of an exhibition, before they can work on a collection catalog, which also *can* wait.

The problem here is not only that museums need greater sums of money, but also that, as more and more of them become hyperactive, they seek funds for more projects than ever before, and ahead of basic functions, which are viewed by new managements as capable of being routinely funded. The hesitancy to tap sources for routine operating expenses that might be likely candidates for main projects means that museums are now competing with themselves for funding.

As less money is allocated to museum research activities, which have begun to be perceived not so much as a necessity but as a burden on the bottom line even though the public programs are only as deep or as shallow as the level of knowledge that informs them, so are more energies being spent in sustaining businesslike activities. Perhaps



this is not bad in itself, that is, not until a businesslike approach is expected in the redaction of footnotes. This may sound Orwellian but unfortunately can be envisaged, as I'll show later. And this brings me back to the matter of *attitude* with which I began. I mean that as financial problems increase, museums are now analyzing and attempting to solve them very differently from the way they did things just a few years ago.

The tendency now is to *manage* the problems. A business-administration mentality is beginning to dominate museums even at the policy-making level. This means—I'm simplifying greatly, drawing a straight line to my point—that all museum activities, all projects, all work will soon be cost-accounted and that the right questions may no longer be asked. For example, such a question as, What is the merit and worth of this project? may not be asked. Instead the questions will be, What will it cost? What revenues will it generate? How many people will it affect? An additional question will come up: Can we take this project on—a collection catalog, for example—without adding staff or without affecting work on the exhibition that must open as scheduled? In point of fact, exhibitions will no longer be postponed for lack of available resources

within a particular time frame, but basic museum work will be allowed to slide.

Actually, it may be good for a director's ego that qualitative questions are not asked. But, in truth, it isn't gratifying not to have to explain the merit of one's projects. The comfort derived from knowing that it is taken for granted by boards that director's proposals are good is simply *not* a substitute for intelligent and probing questions of substance. Worse than that, if the criterion for projects that will not stand on their own without subsidy is purely financial, how does one convey their urgency in terms of content and merit without appearing fiscally irresponsible? If merit does not remain the prime consideration, then in effect we will have weakened or even invalidated what should be the single most persuasive argument for a museum's program.

Ironically and sadly the premium placed on the financial benefits of projects—such as the sums of money earned by coffee-table books, for example—could also inhibit the questioning of commercial schemes with dubious merit. One can be led to hesitate opposing profitable proposals on their merit alone, so exquisitely treacherous in its disguised sophistry is the argument that, in the end, the profits will be used to pay curators' salaries and to support the basic mission of the museum. The trouble is that the museum's basic mission can be directly contradicted by tastelessness and shoddiness of product.

Since I'm writing about inhibitions, let me underscore a more serious one still. Cost accounting, universally applied and carried to an extreme, will clearly inhibit independent study, routine but basic relabeling and housekeeping, travel unrelated to projects, scholarly articles and many other worthwhile programs. An overloaded museum

What is needed is not only understanding but also unfeigned belief...on the part of trustees, supporters, cultural leaders and museum administrators—including directors—in the fundamental principles on which our museums have been built.

photographer, for example, will process orders for a specific project that produces income before a curator's order for prints "simply" for study and comparative examination. Museums must budget substantial unspecified funds and time for general purposes lest they lose in this highly managed world the aura, the flavor of humanism, that disinterested climate so necessary for the formation of right judgments. As museums move ineluctably toward the management of staff time and as time spent on projects is monitored and allocated as an indirect cost, are they not in danger of rendering that elusive but precious unaccountable time impermissible? Will curators one day have to re-

port the time they spend standing back to look, reflect and simply think—and account for every footnote?

Inhibiting practices born of changing attitudes can also become deterrents to quality and innovation at yet another and even more sinister level—I mean at the source of an idea's germination, in the mind itself.

As any project in an art museum calls more and more for proof of its practical application as its justification, in a situation where even something completed such as a scholarly manuscript may not be published for lack of funds, in a milieu where the repeated frustrations of serious proposals turned down or indefinitely postponed take hold of the mind, it is not inconceivable that some day the subconscious wills of curators will begin to sift out and suppress their more arcane and unglamorous ideas in the mind, and these will no longer spring forth for submission to directors. These ideas may never even be articulated, or, just as frightening, if they are consciously rejected in the mind by curators eager to demonstrate fiscal responsibility, administrations will have induced, or should I say managed, a form of intellectual and creative censorship followed by a lethargy that, more than any other factor, will change the character of museums. I don't mean to suggest that these problems are recognized or felt only by curators and other museum professionals; they are of undoubted concern to many trustees and administrative staff as well. It is not a question of embattled directors taken advantage of by philistines within the house; we are all of us victims of this phenomenon.

I am neither defending nor proposing fiscal irresponsibility, nor am I suggesting that the efforts of museums to cure their fiscal problems are necessarily worse than their diseases when I say that money alone will not solve the problem that museums now face and that preoccupation with finances may unwittingly lead museums away from the very standards of quality that the funds are meant to uphold. Museums cannot solve their problems *without* money, for museums are severely undercapitalized, but money *alone* may not be the answer.

There are no easy solutions, and I shall offer no magic elixir save to state my conviction that what is needed is not only understanding but also unfeigned belief, one could even say reconfirmation, on the part of trustees, supporters, cultural leaders and museum administrators—including directors—in the fundamental principles on which our museums have been built. And I do mean belief and not just rhetoric or lip service, for it is well known that those who only borrow their opinions cannot repay their debts.

We must be unequivocal in our conviction that investing in staff-intensive, random and nonaccountable work is essential to the provision of the quality of mind required to shape the best museum programs and exhibitions, essential to the nourishment of the intellectual capital, unfortunately much beleaguered, that is one of the most valuable assets of a museum. Δ

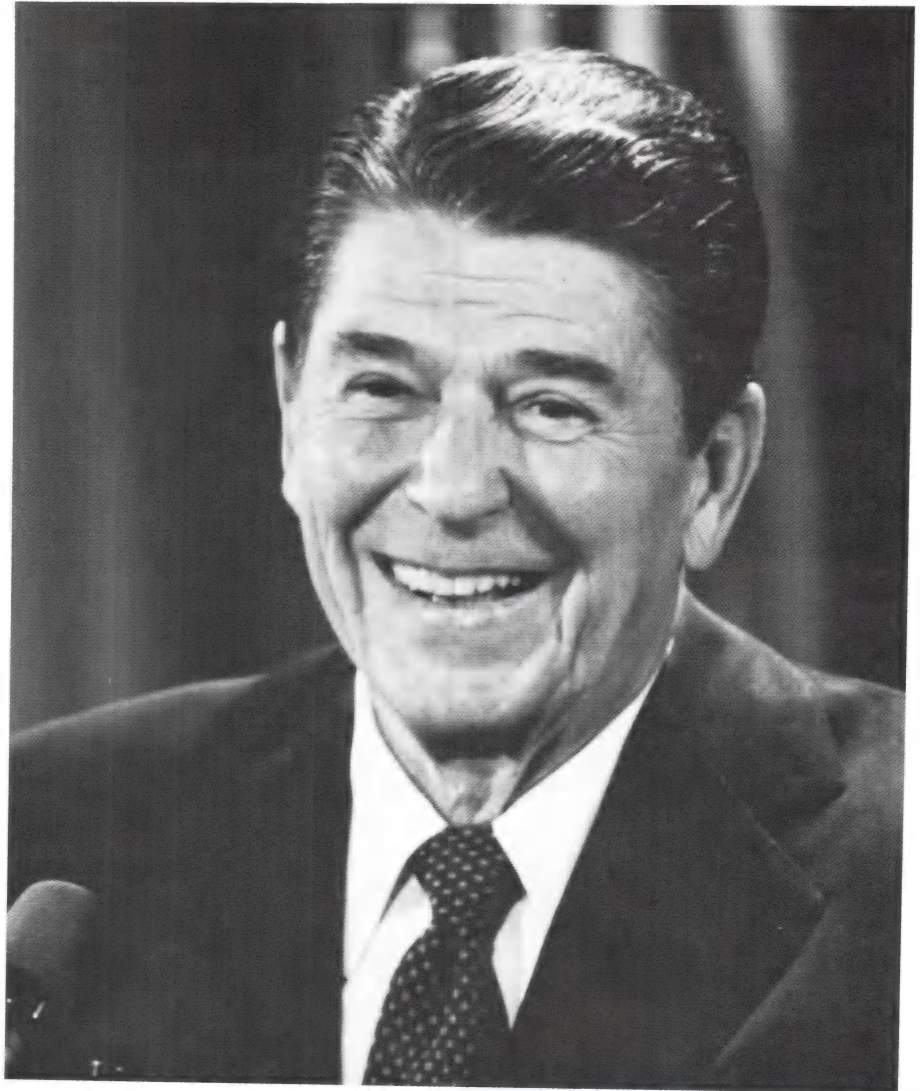
America's Commitment to Cultural Institutions

Reagan and Mondale on the Record

We wanted our readers to know what Ronald Reagan and Walter F. Mondale think about the arts, the humanities and museums: What is their role in our society? What is the responsibility of the federal government toward them? So we asked Reagan and Mondale for statements of their views on these matters. Their responses are printed here.

—Ed.





Ronald Reagan

Our cultural institutions house the mind and spirit of our society. They remind us where we have been and what we have become — what have been our hopes, our dreams, our struggles and our victories. Museums, libraries, universities, performing arts groups and learned societies educate us, free our spirit and bring us joy.

Civilizations are most remembered for their art and thought. In fact, America's world leadership rests in large part on our leadership in the realm of ideas. America's intellectual and cultural institutions house a magnificent record of the strength, diversity and vision of a free people.

Since our earliest days, Americans have given generously of their time, creativity and money to support

America's cultural life. The voluntary contributions and support of private citizens still undergird the arts in America. The lives of millions are enriched because generosity is so much a part of the American spirit. My administration will always strive to preserve the economic and social climate necessary for that spirit to flourish.

While progress and scholarship in the arts are primarily matters for private and local initiative, we seek to encourage a wide variety of artistic activities through the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities. We have increased emphasis on the Endowments' challenge programs. We have established a Presidential Committee on the Arts and the Humanities to stimulate local volunteer efforts in these areas. We initiated legislation that established a National Medal of Arts to recognize both artists and patrons.

With regard to museums, the Arts and Humanities Endowments will continue to support exhibitions of the highest quality. The Institute of Museum Services continues to provide much-needed operational support for a wide range of museums. We will also encourage museums to conserve the invaluable heritage of their collections and to share them with each other. Finally, we will encourage museums everywhere to provide access for all Americans to the immense resources of beauty and enlightenment entrusted to their care.

But the accomplishment I am most proud of is the new vigor we have brought to applying standards of excellence in selecting the endeavors we support. We must be diligent in removing politics from support for cultural institutions. Political considerations should never predominate or interfere with free expression in the arts.

The federal government will continue to support the arts, not as a substitute for private effort but as a stimulus. To do so is to protect our great national heritage and ensure a rich cultural inheritance for generations to come.



Walter F. Mondale

If you examine the role of the arts and humanities through our nation's history, three points leap out.

First, their centrality. The arts and humanities have always been at the heart of our national experience. No record of who we are, what we believe, how we have changed or where we want to go is accurate or complete unless it takes them into account.

Second, the diversity of American culture. The range of imaginative life in our nation stretches from painting to dance, from musical theater to Native American pottery, from poetry to public sculpture, from architecture to symphonic music, from film to jazz—and that scarcely begins to define it. What's more, the development of each form of expression has been accompanied by a commitment to excellence. In broadening our range, we have not failed to deepen our quality.

Diversity also means diversity of audience. One of the

glories of our history has been the democratization of culture. In America, economic or social background is no barrier to the imaginative life.

Third, our pluralistic support for cultural activities and institutions. Government at all levels, the private sector and the independent nonprofit sector are all essential partners in support for America's cultural life.

As president, I intend to bring desperately needed leadership to the arts and the humanities. I will set a different tone from the one today. The climate now is far from friendly to freedom of expression. Creative and intellectual life is viewed with suspicion or derision. The second-rate and the crassly material are celebrated, while the life of the imagination is too often regarded as a subversive fringe. Scholarship and the arts are seen as a privilege for the few, rather than a treasure for all Americans.

I will honor American arts and artists and scholars. I will lead a renaissance of respect for learning and creativity. A president has many powers, but one I intend to use to the full is the power of personal example.

I want all Americans to know that their president believes that the arts and the humanities are at the vital center of our nation. I want mayors to know how cultural organizations can be the anchors for urban revitalization. I want corporations to know that employees care about the cultural richness of their communities. I want developers to know that preserving and recycling historic structures and neighborhoods is more than public spiritedness; it is good economic sense.

The arts and humanities play a vital role in our lives. They lift our spirits, refresh us, educate us and open our minds to new ways of seeing. Providing appropriate federal support for them is an essential investment in our lives and in the future.

The attempt of the current administration to cut the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities has politicized these agencies, undermined their historic mission and weakened their support. That must change.

For three years, the Reagan administration has turned its back on the arts and humanities. It tried to cut both Endowments in half and to destroy the Institute of Museum Services, only to have its efforts rebuffed by the Congress.

The strong bipartisan support these agencies have always enjoyed must continue.

As senator, and then as vice-president, I supported reliable, adequate funding for the agencies that provide grants to artists and cultural institutions. As president, I will seek stable and adequate funding for federal cultural programs so that artists and cultural institutions can rely on federal policies. Direct federal support for cultural programs is a very small part of the federal budget, but it is a crucial catalyst to inspire and encourage nonfederal and private support many times over. The Arts Endowment, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum Services are models of the role of the federal government in areas primarily private in nature but national in character.

The success of the Endowments in attracting the support of the private sector has been exploited by the Reagan administration as justification for proposed budget reductions. The rhetoric of private support has become an excuse for abdicating the federal government's role in every aspect of the nation's life. Cultural support has been no exception.

Internationally, we need to emphasize the value of cultural exchange. Special programs with other countries can bridge differing viewpoints, bring together leading artists and scholars and provide new dimensions of understanding, wisdom and grace. Such programs do not require an outpouring of federal dollars. What they do require is intelligent and creative leadership—the kind of leadership that my administration will provide.

Economic policy, too, has an important bearing on the vitality of our cultural life. A reduced deficit; a healthy economy, growing at a steady, sustainable rate with low inflation; an economy that provides jobs; a society with protection against unemployment and illness: these help artists and cultural institutions no less than any other sector of American life.

In the months ahead, I want to encourage debate on these and all questions facing the cultural community. When we choose a president, we say who we are and what we want our future to be. I want the voices of American artists, scholars, educators and administrators to be heard as we make that fundamental choice.

Time Machines

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by Jay Anderson

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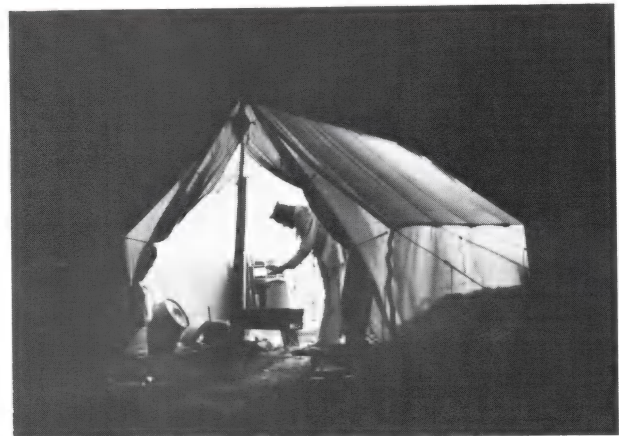
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The Value of Accreditation

PATRICIA E. WILLIAMS

I cannot begin to guess at all the causes of our cultural sadness, not even the most important ones, but I can think of one thing that is wrong with us and eats away at us: we do not know enough about ourselves.

—Lewis Thomas, 1978

The accreditation program of the American Association of Museums, now in its 14th year, embodies the basic principles on which all accrediting processes are conducted—institutional self-study, peer review by an objective team of professionals from outside the museum and final review by an accrediting body. Since the program's inception, 579 museums have achieved accredited status, and 159 have completed the process of reaccreditation. Even more important, the program has promoted a spirit of self-evaluation within the profession that has strengthened standards throughout the field.

Of the three elements in the accreditation process, many feel that the self-study component is the most critical. "We got a little decal and a plaque suitable for framing," says Carl Hansen, director of the Frankenmuth Historical Museum in Michigan. "But," he continues,

what we really got out of it was a 27-page operational manual governing the collection and the administration of the museum, a new fire and security system, redesigned permanent exhibit areas and defined roles of staff and board committee structure. We gained a new awareness

and interest in our image in terms of programs, publications, fund-raising efforts, training of staff and publicity. The museum staff and board saw that accreditation was a critical turning point for the organization; we were committed to the professional standards of the field.

Other professional accrediting organizations have noted similar benefits. H.R. Kells, in *Understanding Accreditation* (1983), has outlined eight purposes of self-study:

- helping institutions and programs improve
- providing the foundation for all planning
- leading to ongoing institutional research and self-analysis
- stimulating review of policies, practices, procedures and records
- enhancing institutional openness
- providing staff development
- assessing the extent to which the institution or program meets creditable standards
- providing useful written materials for the accreditation team.

All this and more have been true for museums that have successfully gone through accreditation. As Nancy Brennan, director of the Peale Museum in Baltimore, puts it, "The process is really for professionalism. It's not for the 'carrots' at the end."

Self-study for museums seeking to be accredited begins with the completion of the Accreditation Commission's questionnaire. Often the process takes a full year, for the museum must review every aspect of its operations. Governance, board and staff relations, staff job descriptions and compensation,

board and staff ethics, the museum's physical facilities, fiscal management, collections care and public programming—all must be examined in relationship to each other so that a full picture of the institution can be drawn. When it is, there are usually some surprises. "I thought we were doing everything right anyway," remembers Earl James, director of the Woodrow Wilson House, a property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C. "It wasn't until after I'd gone through that it became a very valuable tool for self-study."

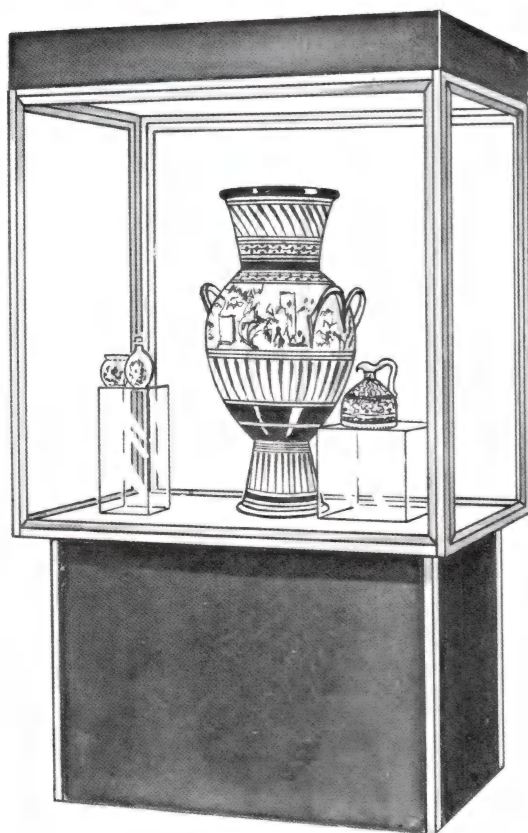
Other museums discover in the process that their policies require clarification. Jean Taylor Federico, former director of the Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, also in Washington, recalls that her museum was

without clear written guidelines that defined the authority of the board and the role of the professional staff. In response to accreditation, we developed a policy statement, a code of ethics and guidelines for acquisitions and loans. The policies are now used as orientation for all new board members, staff and volunteers.

Generally both board and staff welcome the opportunity for serious reflection that the self-study questionnaire prompts. "It makes you take a really thorough look at yourself," observes James Taylor Forrest, director of the University of Wyoming Art Museum in Laramie. "You have to ask yourself what it is you are doing and why you are doing it."

In order for the period of self-study to be fully rewarding, it must be carefully planned to include all staff and board

PATRICIA E. WILLIAMS is secretary to the Accreditation Commission at the AAM.



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members, and there must be a serious, museumwide commitment to improving all aspects of operations. Effective leadership is essential. The leadership must be appropriately placed in the institution to make things happen, and the board and management staff must be committed to the process and ready to spend the time and resources necessary to make it work. The self-study should involve examination of the museum's policies, procedures and "products" and should be an ongoing activity that leads to continued improvement.

Because the process is so rigorous, and so demanding of concerted effort by both board and staff, accreditation should be undertaken only when the museum is fully ready. "Pick the right time for your institution," advises Brennan. "It's expensive in time, resources and staff anxieties." No wonder accreditation has been likened to getting a graduate degree — intense and thought-provoking in the process, and well worth it in the end!

But the need for self-study doesn't stop there; it is not limited to the 12 or 18 months necessary for the accreditation process. It may begin long before; often museums spend as much as five years in advance preparation. Self-study becomes a part of the museum's way of doing things and continues long after the decal is proudly placed on the front door. The impetus toward self-improvement must be an integral part of the museum's management and planning cycle if it is to continue to meet high standards and be ready, when the time comes, for reaccreditation.

Maintaining professional standards is as vital as attaining them, and to be certain that accredited museums continue to be the standard bearers for the field, the Accreditation Commission reviews accredited status every five to 10 years. As the profession grows, its standards improve. The commission is in a unique position to monitor those improvements and reflect them back to the field. Thus an institution undergoing reaccreditation is evaluated according to

currently accepted standards of operation, not those of past years.

As in the initial process, self-evaluation is one of the most beneficial aspects of reaccreditation. The museum is required, in a comprehensive and structured way, to reconsider its entire operations in light of current standards. Robert A. Puckett, director of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum in Kansas, points to the benefits the second time around: "Reaccreditation reminded us of the important things, such as the development of board and staff policies, administrative procedures and ethics, that are often times overlooked in our daily schedule."

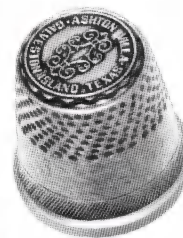
Self-evaluation is an essential component of the operations of the Accreditation Commission, too. Over the years guidelines have been expanded to make the program applicable to a variety of museums, including planetariums, botanical gardens and arboretums, science and technology centers, art centers and historic sites. Recently the commission, in reviewing its procedures, adopted a new list of documents that a museum

must submit for accreditation and reaccreditation. The list provides a guide to the documents museums must have to meet the current standards of the profession.

Recently, too, the accreditation staff conducted a focus group interview of museum directors as part of a program evaluation of accreditation. The participants agreed that the self-study promoted by the process was one of the program's most important benefits. Robert Mawson, manager of program services for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, observed, "What I think happened is that as the process went on, the board became much more involved. There is now a much stronger commitment to professional standards throughout the National Trust's hierarchy."

It is that elevation of standards across the museum profession that is one of the accreditation program's proudest achievements. Accreditation has created a climate in which self-evaluation and self-improvement thrive. Michael Rierson, director of the

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History Division of Fairfax County, Virginia, and a participant in the focus group interview, sums it up: "Therein lies the value of accreditation — that it helps the profession develop itself."

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The following is a list by state of the 579 museums accredited by the American Association of Museums as of March 31, 1984. The date appearing in parentheses is the year in which the museum was accredited; the second date is the year it was reaccredited.

Alabama

Birmingham Museum of Art (1983)
Huntsville Museum of Art (1980)
Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts (1978)

Alaska

Alaska State Museum, Juneau (1975)
Anchorage Historical and Fine Arts Museum (1973)
Pratt Museum, Homer (1982)
University of Alaska Museum, Fairbanks (1973)

Arizona

Amerind Foundation Museum, Dragon (1974)

Arizona Historical Society Museum,
Tucson (1972, 1982)
Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson
(1972, 1982)
Arizona State Museum of the University of
Arizona, Tucson (1972, 1982)
Desert Botanical Garden, Phoenix (1983)
Fort Huachuca Historical Museum (1980)
Heard Museum of Anthropology and
Primitive Art, Phoenix (1973)
Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff
(1973)
Phoenix Art Museum (1973)
Tucson Museum of Art (1983)
University of Arizona Museum of Art,
Tucson (1982)

Arkansas

Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock (1972,
1982)
Arkansas State University Museum,
Jonesboro (1973)
Arkansas Territorial Museum, Little Rock
(1981)
University of Arkansas Museum,
Fayetteville (1980)

California

Alexander Lindsay Junior Museum,
Walnut Creek (1974)
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (1972,
1983)
California Academy of Sciences, San
Francisco (1971, 1978)
California Museum of Science and
Industry, Los Angeles (1975)
Coyote Point Museum, San Mateo (1972,
1982)
Crocker Art Gallery, Sacramento (1975)
De Saisset Gallery and Museum, Santa
Clara (1979)
Edward-Dean Museum of Decorative Arts,
Cherry Valley (1975)
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (1972)
Francis E. Fowler, Jr., Foundation Museum,
Beverly Hills (1980)
Fresno Arts Center (1973)
Hebrew Union College Skirball Museum,
Los Angeles (1978)
J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu (1977)
Judah L. Magnes Museum, Berkeley (1974)
Junipero Serra Museum, San Diego (1973)
Kern County Museum, Bakersfield (1975)
Long Beach Museum of Art (1972, 1982)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1972,
1982)
Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art (1976)
Natural History Museum of Los Angeles
County (1971, 1983)
Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport
Beach (1982)
Oakland Museum (1973)
Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History
(1972, 1982)
Palm Springs Desert Museum (1983)
Palo Alto Junior Museum (1982)
Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens,
Claremont (1972)
Riverside Municipal Museum (1972)

Robert H. Lowie Museum of Anthropology,
Berkeley (1976)
San Bernardino County Museum,
Redlands (1973)
San Diego Museum of Art (1973)
San Diego Museum of Man (1973)
San Diego Natural History Museum (1974)
San Francisco Museum of Art (1973)
San Joaquin County Historical Museum,
Lodi (1973)
San Jose Historical Museum (1977)
San Mateo County Historical Association
Museum (1972, 1983)
Santa Barbara Museum of Art (1973)
Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
(1973)
Santa Cruz Museum (1972, 1983)
University Art Museum, Berkeley (1980)
University Art Museum, Santa Barbara
(1973)

Colorado

Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (1971,
1983)
Denver Art Museum (1972, 1981)
Denver Museum of Natural History (1975)
Greeley Municipal Museum (1972)
Littleton Historical Museum (1977)
Museum of Western Colorado, Grand
Junction (1971, 1982)
State Historical Society of Colorado
Museum, Denver (1972, 1983) and eight
subsidiaries: Baca House/Bloom House,
Trinidad (1972); El Pueblo Museum,
Pueblo (1972, 1983); Fort Garland (1972,
1983); Fort Vasquez, Platteville (1972);
Grant-Humphreys Mansion, Denver
(1984); Healy House/Dexter Cabin,
Leadville (1972, 1983); Pearce McAllister
Cottage, Denver (1983); Ute Museum,
Montrose (1972)
Western Museum of Mining and Industry,
Colorado Springs (1979)

Connecticut

Florence Griswold Museum of the Lyme
Historical Society, Old Lyme (1978)
Lyman Allyn Museum, New London (1976)
Mark Twain Memorial, Hartford (1975)
Mattatuck Museum of the Mattatuck
Historical Society, Waterbury (1972,
1982)
Museum of Art, Science and Industry,
Bridgeport (1975)
Mystic Marinelife Aquarium (1983)
Mystic Seaport Museum (1972, 1983)
Nature Center for Environmental
Activities, Inc., Westport (1973)
New Britain Museum of American Art
(1972)
New Britain Youth Museum (1976)
Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale
University, New Haven (1984)
Stowe-Day Foundation, Hartford (1973)
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford (1973)
Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum,
Wethersfield (1973, 1983)
William Benton Museum of Art, Storrs
(1976)

Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven
(1972, 1983)

Delaware

Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington (1972,
1982)
Hagley Museum, Wilmington (1972)
Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur
Museum (1971, 1979)

District of Columbia

Corcoran Gallery of Art (1977)
Daughters of the American Revolution
Museum (1973, 1981)
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
(1979)
National Gallery of Art (1979)
National Museum of African Art (1975)
National Museum of American Art and
one subsidiary: Renwick Gallery (1976)
National Museum of American History
(1972, 1984)
National Museum of Natural History
(1975)
National Portrait Gallery (1976)
Octagon (1973, 1980)
Phillips Collection (1979)
Textile Museum (1973)
Woodrow Wilson House (1983)

Florida

Cummer Gallery of Art, Jacksonville
(1975)
Fairchild Tropical Garden, Miami (1981)
Florida State Museum, Gainesville (1973,
1981)
George D. and Harriet W. Cornell Fine Arts
Center, Rollins College, Winter Park
(1981)
Henry Morrison Flagler Museum, Palm
Beach (1973, 1983)
Historic Pensacola Preservation Board
(1973)
Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board
(1973)
Historical Museum of Southern Florida,
Miami (1979)
Jacksonville Art Museum (1978)
Jacksonville Museum of Arts and Sciences
(1983)
John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art,
Sarasota (1972)
Loch Haven Art Center, Orlando (1971,
1978)
Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables (1972)
Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale (1974)
Museum of Arts & Sciences, Daytona
Beach (1977)
Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg (1972,
1983)
Norton Gallery and School of Art, West
Palm Beach (1972, 1981)
Pensacola Museum of Art (1983)
Polk Public Museum, Lakeland (1983)
Society of the Four Arts, Palm Beach (1972,
1982)
Temple Mound Museum, Fort Walton
Beach (1974, 1981)
University Gallery, Gainesville (1973)

IN-HOUSE

Georgia

Columbus Museum of Arts and Sciences (1972, 1982)
Georgia Museum of Art, Athens (1979)
High Museum of Art, Atlanta (1972, 1981)
Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, Savannah (1979) and one subsidiary: Owens-Thomas House, Savannah (1979)

Hawaii

Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu (1975)
Honolulu Academy of Arts (1972, 1975)
Lyman House Memorial Museum, Hilo (1973, 1984)
Mission Houses Museum, Honolulu (1972, 1983)

Idaho

Idaho State Historical Museum, Boise (1972)

Illinois

Adler Planetarium, Chicago (1972)
Art Institute of Chicago (1972, 1982)
Burpee Natural History Museum, Rockford (1975)

Chicago Academy of Sciences (1978)
Chicago Historical Society (1979)
Early American Museum, Mahomet (1973)
Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago (1972, 1981)
Illinois State Museum, Springfield (1972, 1981) and one subsidiary: Dickson Mounds Museum, Lewiston (1972, 1983)
Krannert Art Museum, Champaign (1977)
Lakeview Museum of Art and Sciences, Peoria (1973)
Maurice Spertus Museum of Judaica, Chicago (1976)
Morton Arboretum, Lisle (1976)
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1982)
Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (1975)
University Museum and Art Galleries, Carbondale (1977)
University Museums, Normal (1978)

Indiana

Ball State University Art Gallery, Muncie (1978)
Children's Museum of Indianapolis (1971, 1981)
Conner Prairie Pioneer Settlement, Noblesville (1977)
Discovery Hall Museum, South Bend (1982)
Evansville Museum of Arts and Science (1978)

Greater Lafayette Museum of Art (1982)
Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis (1976) and two subsidiaries: Angel Mounds State Memorial, Evansville (1976); White Water Canal State Memorial, Metamora (1976)
Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington (1984)
Indianapolis Museum of Art (1972, 1983)
Sheldon Swope Art Gallery, Terre Haute (1972, 1983)
Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame (1973)
Tippecanoe County Historical Museum, Lafayette (1981)
William Hammond Mathers Museum, Bloomington (1971)

Iowa

Blanden Art Gallery, Fort Dodge (1980)
Brunnier Gallery and Museum, Iowa State University, Ames (1983)
Cedar Rapids Museum of Art (1981)
Charles H. MacNider Museum, Mason City (1973, 1984)
Davenport Art Gallery (1973, 1984)
Grout Museum of History and Science, Waterloo (1983)
Museum of Art, University of Iowa, Iowa City (1977)
Putnam Museum, Davenport (1974)
Sanford Museum and Planetarium, Cherokee (1972, 1984)

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Sioux City Art Center (1981)
Sioux City Public Museum (1974)
University of Northern Iowa Museum,
Cedar Falls (1976)
Vesterheim, Norwegian-American
Museum, Decorah (1972, 1983)

Kansas

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene
(1975)
Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum,
Chanute (1977)
Santa Fe Trail Center, Larned (1977)
Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence (1979)
Wichita Art Museum (1972)
Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical
Museum (1972, 1982)

Kentucky

J.B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville (1975)
Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armor,
Fort Knox (1978)
University of Kentucky Art Museum,
Lexington (1983)

Louisiana

Alexandria Museum/Visual Arts Center
(1984)
Gallier House, New Orleans (1974, 1984)
Historic New Orleans Collection (1978)
Louisiana Arts and Science Center, Baton
Rouge (1972, 1982)
Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans
(1976)
Meadows Museum of Art, Centenary
College of Louisiana, Shreveport (1980)
New Orleans Museum of Art (1972, 1982)
Shadows-on-the-Teche, New Iberia (1983)

Maine

Bowdoin College Museum of Art,
Brunswick (1979) and one subsidiary:
Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum,
Brunswick (1979)
Brick Store Museum, Kennebunk (1978)
Maine Maritime Museum, Bath (1983)
Maine State Museum, Augusta (1975)
Old Gaol Museum, York (1973, 1983)
Seashore Trolley Museum,
Kennebunkport (1978)
William A. Farnsworth Library and
Museum, Rockland (1972, 1981)

Maryland

Art Gallery, University of Maryland,
College Park (1977)
Baltimore Museum of Art (1972)
Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons (1981)
Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, St.
Michaels (1978)
Municipal Museum of the City of
Baltimore, Peale Museum (1972, 1983)
and one subsidiary: Carroll Mansion
(1972, 1983)
Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (1972, 1984)
Washington County Museum of Fine Arts,
Hagerstown (1976)
William Paca House and Garden, Tobacco
Prise House, Barracks and Victualling
Warehouse of Historic Annapolis (1980)

Massachusetts

Berkshire County Historical Society
Museum, Pittsfield (1974)
Brockton Art Museum (1977)
Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge
(1977)
Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum,
Weston (1971, 1982)
Chesterwood, Stockbridge (1982)
Children's Museum, Boston (1972, 1983)
China Trade Museum, Milton (1982)
Concord Antiquarian Museum (1973, 1984)
Connecticut Valley Historical Museum,
Springfield (1973)
De Cordova and Dana Museum and Park,
Lincoln (1974)
Essex Institute, Salem (1972, 1982)
Fitchburg Art Museum (1979)
Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge (1975)
Hancock Shaker Village, Shaker
Community, Pittsfield (1980)
Harrison Gray Otis House of the Society
for the Preservation of New England
Antiquities, Boston (1976)
Heritage Plantation of Sandwich (1981)
Historic Deerfield (1973, 1982)
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston
(1972)
John Woodman Higgins Armory, Worcester
(1972)
Mead Art Museum, Amherst (1972, 1983)
Merrimack Valley Textile Museum, North
Andover (1971, 1978)
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (1972)
Museum of Science, Boston (1971)
New England Aquarium, Boston (1983)
Old Sturbridge Village (1971, 1982)
Peabody Museum of Archaeology and
Ethnology, Cambridge (1975)
Peabody Museum of Salem (1971, 1982)
Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth (1983)
Sandwich Glass Museum (1977)
Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute,
Williamstown (1972, 1981)
Wenham Historical Association and
Museum (1972, 1983)
Whaling Museum, New Bedford (1974)
Worcester Art Museum (1978)

Michigan

Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., Museum, Flint (1983)
Art Center of Battle Creek (1982)
Children's Museum, Detroit (1974)
Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum,
Bloomfield Hills (1977)
Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield
Hills (1972, 1983)
Detroit Institute of Arts (1973, 1983)
Ella Sharp Museum, Jackson (1979)
Flint Institute of Arts (1972, 1983)
Frankenmuth Historical Museum (1980)
Grand Rapids Art Museum (1983)
Grand Rapids Public Museum (1971, 1978)
Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield
Village, Dearborn (1976)
Jesse Besser Museum, Alpena (1979)
Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (1972)
Kingman Museum of Natural History,

Battle Creek (1979)

Krasl Art Center, St. Joseph (1983)
Kresge Art Museum, East Lansing (1973)
Mackinac Island State Park (1973)
Museum, Michigan State University, East
Lansing (1977)
Saginaw Art Museum (1981)
University of Michigan Museum of Art,
Ann Arbor (1973, 1983)

Minnesota

Minneapolis Institute of Arts (1972, 1982)
Minnesota Museum of Art, St. Paul (1972)
Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul
(1971, 1983)
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1973,
1982)

Mississippi

Lauren Rogers Library and Museum of Art,
Laurel (1973)
Mississippi Museum of Natural History,
Jackson (1982)
Mississippi State Historical Museum,
Jackson (1972, 1983)
University Museums, University of
Mississippi, University (1982)

Missouri

Albrecht Gallery of Art, St. Joseph (1973,
1983)
Jefferson National Expansion Memorial
National Historic Site, St. Louis (1980)
Marmec Museum, St. James (1974)
Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis (1975)
Museum of Art and Archaeology,
Columbia (1973, 1984)
Museum of Science and Natural History,
St. Louis (1976)
Nelson Gallery of Art, Atkins Museum of
Fine Arts, Kansas City (1972)
St. Joseph Museum (1971, 1983) and one
subsidiary: Pony Express Stables
Museum, St. Joseph (1971, 1983)
St. Louis Art Museum (1973, 1983)

Montana

C.M. Russell Gallery, Great Falls (1974)
Montana Historical Society Museum,
Helena (1973)
Yellowstone Art Center, Billings (1982)

Nebraska

Hastings Museum (1973)
Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha (1973, 1982)
Nebraska State Historical Society
Museum, Lincoln (1973)
Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln
(1972)
Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer,
Grand Island (1977)
University of Nebraska State Museum,
Lincoln (1973)

Nevada

Nevada Historical Society Museum, Reno
(1972)
Nevada State Museum, Carson City (1972)
Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko
(1973)

IN-HOUSE

New Hampshire

Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester (1973)
Governor B. John Langdon Memorial
Mansion, subsidiary of the Society for
the Preservation of New England
Antiquities, Portsmouth (1976)
Hopkins Center Art Gallery, Hanover
(1975)
Strawbery Banke, Portsmouth (1977)

New Jersey

Clinton Historical Museum (1977)
Montclair Art Museum (1972, 1982)
Morris Museum of Arts and Science,
Convent (1972, 1983)
Museum of Art, Princeton University
(1983)
New Jersey State Museum, Trenton (1974)
Newark Museum (1972, 1982)
Summit Art Center (1983)

New Mexico

Ernest Thompson Seton Memorial Library
and Museum, Cimarron (1973)

Maxwell Museum of Anthropology,
Albuquerque (1973)
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe (1976)
Roswell Museum and Art Center (1978)

New York

Abigail Adams Smith House, New York
(1983)
Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake
(1973)
Albany Institute of History and Art (1980)
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo (1977)
American Craft Museum, New York (1973,
1982)
American Museum of Natural History,
New York (1972)
Arnot Art Museum, Elmira (1976)
Brooklyn Museum (1972)
Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society
Museum (1974)
Buffalo Museum of Science (1972, 1983)
Buffalo Zoological Gardens (1978)
Campbell-Whittlesey House, Rochester
(1973, 1981)
Corning Museum of Glass (1973)
Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse (1979)
Farmers' Museum, Cooperstown (1972,
1984)
Fenimore House, Cooperstown (1972, 1984)
Fort Ticonderoga (1972, 1982)
Fraunces Tavern Museum, New York (1979)
Frick Collection, New York (1973, 1983)

Guild Hall Museum, East Hampton (1973,
1980)
Heckscher Museum, Huntington (1972,
1983)
Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell
University, Ithaca (1971, 1982)
Hudson River Museum, Yonkers (1974)
Jefferson County Historical Society,
Watertown (1972)
Jewish Museum, New York (1981)
Memorial Art Gallery of the University of
Rochester (1973, 1982)
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
(1972, 1981)
Museum of Art, Munson-Williams-Proctor
Institute, Utica (1983)
Museum of Modern Art, New York (1974)
Museum of the American Indian, Heye
Foundation, New York (1972, 1980)
Museum of the American Numismatic
Society, New York (1976)
Museum of the City of New York (1972,
1982)
Museum of the New-York Historical
Society, New York (1972)
Museum of the Ontario County Historical
Society, Canandaigua (1981)
Museums at Hartwick College, Oneonta
(1972, 1983)
Museums at Stony Brook (1973, 1983)
Nassau County Museum, Syosset (1973)
New York Botanical Garden, Bronx (1971,

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1982) and one subsidiary: Cary Arboretum, Millbrook (1982)
 New York Hall of Science, Corona (1977)
 New York Zoological Park and New York Aquarium of the New York Zoological Society, Bronx (1972, 1983)
 Parrish Art Museum, Southampton (1973, 1983)
 Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (1983)
 Potsdam Public Museum (1972)
 Remington Art Museum, Ogdensburg (1973)
 Rensselaer County Historical Society, Troy (1972, 1982)
 Roberson Center for the Arts and Sciences, Binghamton (1973)
 Rochester Museum and Science Center (1973, 1984)
 Rye Historical Society Museum (1980)
 Schenectady Museum (1974)
 Shaker Museum Foundation, Old Chatham (1972)
 Silas Wright House and Museum, Canton (1982)
 Sleepy Hollow Restorations, Tarrytown (1973, 1980)
 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1971, 1982)
 Stone-Tolan House, Rochester (1981)
 Strong Museum, Rochester (1984)
 Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium, Centerport (1972, 1982)

West Point Museum (1977)
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1972, 1984)

North Carolina

Ackland Art Museum, Chapel Hill (1975)
 Duke University Art Museum, Durham (1973)
 Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte (1972)
 Morehead Planetarium, Chapel Hill (1977)
 North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh (1973)
 North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh (1972) and eight subsidiaries: Alamance Battleground, Burlington (1972); Charles B. Aycock Birthplace, Fremont (1972); Historic Bath (1972); Brunswick Town, Southport (1972); Fort Fisher, Kure Beach (1972); James K. Polk Birthplace, Pineville (1972); Town Creek Indian Mound, Mount Gilead (1972); Zebulon B. Vance Birthplace, Weaverville (1972)
 North Carolina State Museum, Raleigh (1979)
 Old Salem and the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston-Salem (1972, 1982)
 Reynolda House, Winston-Salem (1972, 1982)
 Science Museums of Charlotte (1983)

Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem (1979)
 St. John's Museum of Art, Wilmington (1972, 1983)

Ohio

Akron Art Museum (1972, 1983)
 Allen County Museum, Lima (1980)
 Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin (1973)
 Arms Museum, Youngstown (1977)
 Canton Art Institute (1974)
 Cincinnati Art Museum (1972, 1983)
 Cleveland Museum of Art (1973)
 Cleveland Museum of Natural History (1975)
 Columbus Museum of Art (1972, 1982)
 Dayton Art Institute (1972, 1982)
 Dayton Museum of Natural History (1972, 1983)
 Howard Dittrick Museum of Historical Medicine, Cleveland (1972)
 Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum, Coshocton (1973)
 Massillon Museum (1972, 1983)
 McKinley Museum of History, Science and Industry, Canton (1973)
 Miami University Art Museum, Oxford (1984)
 Ohio Historical Society Museum, Columbus (1973, 1984)
 Rutherford B. Hayes Library and Museum, Fremont (1975)

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Springfield Art Center (1977)
Taft Museum, Cincinnati (1972)
Toledo Museum of Art (1973)
Western Reserve Historical Society
Museum, Cleveland (1975)
Zoological Society of Cincinnati (1982)

Oklahoma

Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma,
Norman (1977)
Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton (1972,
1983)
Oklahoma Art Center, Oklahoma City
(1973)
State Museum of Oklahoma, Oklahoma
City (1974)
Stovall Museum of Science and History,
Norman (1972)
Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American
History and Art, Tulsa (1983)
Tulsa Zoological Park (1982)
Woolaroc Museum, Bartlesville (1972)

Oregon

Columbia River Maritime Museum,
Astoria (1972, 1981)
Museum of Art, University of Oregon,
Eugene (1975)
Oregon Historical Society Museum,
Portland (1974)

Oregon Museum of Science and Industry,
Portland (1972)
Portland Art Museum (1971, 1983)

Pennsylvania

Academy of Natural Sciences Museum,
Philadelphia (1972)
Allentown Art Museum (1980)
Annie S. Kemerer Museum, Bethlehem
(1980)
Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford
(1979)
Buhl Institute of Science, Pittsburgh (1972,
1983)
Carnegie Museum of Natural History,
Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh (1972,
1983)
Drake Well Museum, Titusville (1983)
Ephrata Cloister, Ephrata (1983)
Franklin Institute Science Museum and
Planetarium, Philadelphia (1974)
General Gates House and Golden Plough
Tavern, Log House, Bonham House and
the Museum of the Historical Society of
York County (1972)
Lycoming County Historical Museum,
Williamsport (1973)
Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute,
Pittsburgh (1972)
North Museum, Franklin and Marshall
College, Lancaster (1972)
Old Economy Village, Ambridge (1978)
Pennsbury Manor, Morrisville (1983)
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts,
Philadelphia (1973, 1982)
Pennsylvania Farm Museum of Landis
Valley, Lancaster (1978)

Philadelphia Maritime Museum (1979)
Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Rodin
Museum (1973)
Philadelphia Zoological Garden (1983)
Reading Public Museum and Art Gallery
(1982)
Reading School District Planetarium (1977)
University Museum, University of
Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (1975, 1983)
Westmoreland County Museum of Art,
Greensburg (1972)
William Penn Memorial Museum,
Harrisburg (1978)

Rhode Island

John Brown House of the Rhode Island
Historical Society, Providence (1976)
Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of
Design, Providence (1983)
Newport Historical Society Museum
(1972, 1983)
Old Slater Mill Museum, Pawtucket (1973)

South Carolina

Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet (1972,
1983)
Charleston Museum (1973)
Columbia Museum of Art and Science
(1971, 1983)
Gibbes Art Gallery, Charleston (1972, 1983)
Greenville County Museum of Art (1973)
Historic Camden (1972)
Historic Columbia Foundation Museums:
Robert Mills Historic House; Woodrow
Wilson Boyhood Home; Hampton-
Preston House (1983)

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Archives, Johnson City (1973)
Dixon Gallery and Gardens, Memphis
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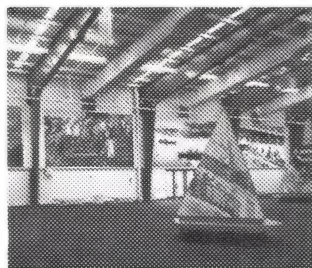


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Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond (1979)
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Roanoke Fine Arts Center (1977)
Sully Plantation, Chantilly (1979)
U.S. Army Transportation Museum, Fort Eustis (1980)
Valentine Museum, Richmond (1972, 1984)
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond (1973)
VMI Museum, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington (1972, 1982)
Woodrow Wilson Birthplace, Staunton (1976)

Washington

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Henry Art Gallery, Seattle (1974)
Museum of History and Industry, Seattle (1973)
Seattle Art Museum (1972, 1983)
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West Virginia

Huntington Galleries (1977)
Mansion Museum/Oglebay Institute, Wheeling (1972, 1984)
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Madison Art Center (1974, 1983)
Milwaukee Art Museum (1983)
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Waukesha County Historical Museum (1980)

Wyoming

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State Museum of the Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, Cheyenne (1973)
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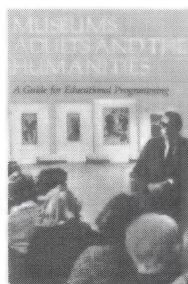
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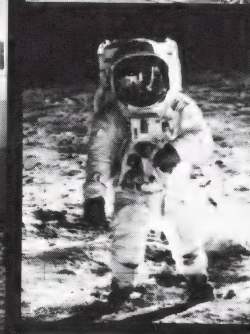
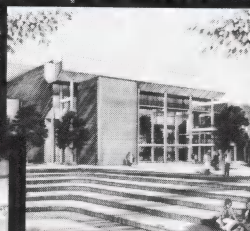
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Financial and Accounting Guide for Nonprofit Organizations

Malvern J. Gross, Jr., and William Warshauer, Jr. New York: Ronald Press, John Wiley and Sons, 1983. 3d ed. rev. 564 pp., hardbound \$54.

Financial Resource Management for Nonprofit Organizations

Leon Haller. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Spectrum Books, Prentice-Hall Inc. 1982. 288 pp., hardbound \$17.95, paper \$8.95.

Reviewed by Mary M. Wehle

Although these two books have the same focus—the volunteer treasurer of any of a wide variety of small to medium-sized nonprofit organizations—they differ in approach. The *Financial and Accounting Guide for Nonprofit Organizations* is the third edition of a comprehensive reference on accounting, financial control and regulatory compliance written by certified public accountants. It carefully illustrates technical points with simple examples, but it does not cover all nonprofits comprehensively. *Financial Resource Management for Nonprofit Organizations* emphasizes the philosophy and approach necessary for the successful functioning of small nonprofits, particularly those in the initial phases of operation. Although less applicable to museums, its informal tone provides a more readable introduction to the

sphere of financial management for a novice.

Financial and Accounting Guide for Nonprofit Organizations is an invaluable reference for volunteer treasurers and financial officers of small and medium-sized museums. Primarily concerned with the accounting and financial reporting required of nonprofits, it includes basic descriptions of federal and state reporting requirements, bookkeeping techniques and financial controls. It provides the lay reader with sufficient information to permit an intelligent discussion with accounting professionals. A very small organization might be able to use the material as the basis for a simple system of accounting and financial reporting.

The first section, "Key Financial Concepts," contains a simple and complete description of the "fund accounting" system peculiar to nonprofits, a system that can make it difficult for the layperson to understand nonprofit financial reports. Using simple examples of various types of nonprofits, the authors describe the mechanics and objectives of fund accounting, including the often misunderstood interfund transfers. The authors delineate alternatives in financial reporting practice—in capitalization and consequent depreciation of fixed assets—and clearly state their preference for certain methods. Although many accountants might disagree with the stated preferences, the authors are to be commended for the clarity with which they differentiate between acceptable practices and their preferences.

Part 2 deals with financial statement presentation of cash, accrual and fund accounting statements, again with simple illustrations. Part 3, "Accounting and Reporting Guidelines," describes the prescribed accounting required of differing types of nonprofits—volun-

tary health and welfare organizations, colleges and universities, hospitals and "other" nonprofit organizations, the category that includes museums. Special accounting problems of specific nonprofit organizations are included as a separate chapter; in museums, these include valuation of collections and capitalization of fixed assets.

Because the material to this point in the book encompasses all nonprofit institutions, museum personnel will find they must read carefully to ascertain which principles are applicable in their specific circumstances. It would have been helpful to all readers had the authors included a chart comparing the accounting required in the differing nonprofit areas.

In the final chapter of part 3 the authors suggest future trends that may affect nonprofit financial reporting. In particular they look to increased comparability between nonprofit and profit-making organizations through the improved presentation of fund accounting statements and emphasis upon the "excess of revenue and support over expenses" as the "bottom line" for judging an institution's efficiency.

Part 4, "Controlling the Nonprofit Organization," contains an excellent chapter on short- and long-range budgets. A subsequent chapter, titled "Avoiding Bankruptcy," suggests remedial actions in the face of financial distress. The authors provide particular advice for small organizations on the institution of internal controls, obtaining a bookkeeper and the role of independent audits.

Perhaps the most valuable part of this book for the volunteer treasurer or non-CPA financial officer is part 5, "Tax and Compliance Reporting Requirements." The *Guide* carefully describes the various forms of tax-exempt status and includes reproductions of the fed-

MARY M. WEHLE is managing director of Idmon Associates, a Chicago-based consulting firm specializing in services for nonprofit organizations. She is also senior financial associate of the Museum Management Institute, held yearly at the University of California, Berkeley.

eral information forms 990 and 990PF as well as a comprehensive annotation explaining the various sections of the forms. Since the format of the federal information forms differs substantively from the usual financial reporting in published statements, these forms are frequently confusing to those who are not professional accountants. An additional chapter summarizes state reporting requirements.

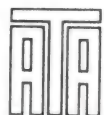
The final part of the book provides a review of bookkeeping procedures. Although not sufficient to permit a layperson to set up the books, the information provided would facilitate conversation between the novice and the professional accountant and bookkeeper.

In summary, the *Financial and Accounting Guide for Nonprofit Organizations* is a necessary component of the reference library of the treasurer and/or financial officer of a small or medium-sized museum.

Financial Resource Management for Nonprofit Organizations is directed to present and potential managers and directors of small nonprofit organizations, particularly those in the health and human services field, and in voluntary cooperatives. Although uneven in style and tone, it contains elements useful in other nonprofit settings.

In the first section, "Significance and Potential of Small Nonprofit Organizations," Haller begins with an unusual definition of nonprofits — they are in the "business" of developing innovative products and services to meet social needs, he says. Characteristics of such organizations include channeling volunteer resources in potentially productive ways within a highly competitive funding environment, initial underfinancing, personnel lacking in managerial skills and an organizational structure determined by legal requirements rather than by organizational needs. In making the case for improved management and managerial techniques, the author cites the competition for funds and the shift in funding sources from private voluntary contributions to state and federal reimbursement contracts. Resistance to improved management has come, in his opinion, from the inability to measure "productivity," lack of management training and technical assistance, passive and ineffective governance by boards of trustees and "ideological attitudes" of staff and supporters that the "moral values" of the

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organization transcend the need for measurement and financial accountability. In addition, the author suggests that, like the entrepreneur in the profit-making sector, the innovator in the nonprofit organization is more interested in the design of the project than in ensuring its effective, continuing administration.

"Planning and Budget Formulation" is the strongest section in the book. The three chapters deal primarily with planning and budgeting for start-up operations. For each unmet need, it is necessary to identify the need, delineate the purposes and goals of the project, define the approach and strategy, consider and select from possible activities, determine the priority of such activities, identify the functions to be performed (both programmatic and administra-

tive), evaluate the human and material resource requirements and calculate their costs, and identify the sources of funds to support the project. Each of these steps is both charted and described.

Determination of the costs of necessary resources provides the basis of the budget. The discussion of the process highlights the importance of the assumptions that must be made explicit in developing relevant cost. Haller recommends that the nonprofit organization pay particular attention to necessary administrative and support costs, especially since many funding agencies are reluctant to provide for overhead costs. Of particular merit is his recommendation that a 90-day budget will reveal, for start-up operations, the necessary action required before the project can become operational as well as the required investment.

The third section, "Managerial Operations and Issues," is primarily concerned with bookkeeping procedures that will enable the organization to control receipts and expenditures and anticipate available resources, particularly

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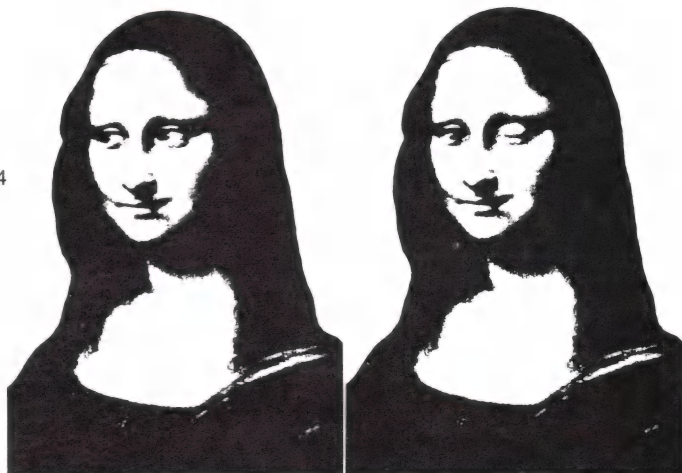
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cash. A major section deals with the problem of third-party reimbursement, with emphasis on the reporting requirements and the inevitable delay in the reimbursement process.

Within this same section the author discusses the necessity and technique of cash flow forecasting and gives some attention to simple methods of internal control. He describes the financial reporting process and delineates the role of the accountant. Haller complains that much financial reporting in non-profit organizations is designed by accountants for accountants, rather than for managers, governance participants who are not accountants and others responsible for both activities and organizational finances. Yet he does not offer any suggestions as to how such reports might be improved. Indeed, although the content of the audited financial report is eventually described in brief, nowhere is it illustrated.

Although the fourth section is titled "Economic Enterprises," its three chapters are directed to voluntary nonprofit cooperatives. The descriptive material is drawn from the profit-making sector and includes a relatively extensive discussion of the terminology used in production enterprises, as "cost-of-goods-sold," "gross profit" and "taxes." Subsequent sections on cost behavior and analysis also deal only with a production model. No attempt has been made to apply such concepts as "break-even analysis" to other nonprofit settings like museum exhibitions. The material is considerably abridged and thus requires careful study.

The final section on "Governance" offers broad discussion of board selection, organization and function. The author makes a number of generalizations, at one point writing, "Governing boards, like programs, should mirror the organizational functions that are key to their success at any given time."

Five appendixes complete the volume: a listing of management support organizations, Small Business Administration offices, Small Business Administration publications, sources of (commercial) business statistics and an extremely brief bibliography.

It is unfortunate that this book is not better organized, for many good ideas are almost thrown away by being buried in the text without particular emphasis. For example, the statement, "An annual review of activities and future plans and

monthly monitoring of an approved budget are the absolute minimal tasks that a board has in carrying out the financial management requirements of its 'trustee' responsibilities" should have received more attention. Rather than outlining the minimal financial management tasks, it would have been more appropriate to offer the optimal tasks. Similarly, the statement, "A [budget] is an organizational plan to spend money in a particular way (strategy and priorities) to achieve project objectives and organizational goals," might have received more emphasis had it been presented before discussing the appearance or form of the budget. The rather chatty style occasionally encompasses a stream-of-consciousness manner of presentation.

However, to Haller's credit, only one absolute misstatement was found: "A not-for-profit enterprise will pay taxes on its surplus earnings just like any other commercial enterprise." There is little doubt that taxes are levied on unrelated business income; however, instances of tax imposition on surplus are unknown, except for rigidly controlled private foundations.

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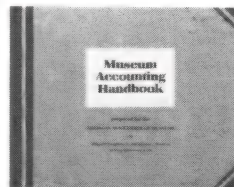
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set of procedures and forms . . . Price Waterhouse and Co., and the AAM have clearly recognized an important need and made a major contribution." ix + 158 pp., illus., bibliog., index, \$14, \$11.50 to members.



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For museums, the usefulness of this book is limited. It would be helpful for a community group planning to institute a new museum, or for museum personnel involved in extracurricular charitable and cooperative enterprises. Novice managers of auxiliary museum enterprises, such as book and gift shops might find the production model relevant. Perhaps the third section, "Managerial Operations and Issues," would explain to all museum personnel why they must follow stated procedures and handle many types of papers — if they would be willing to read it.

The International Trade in Art

Paul M. Bator. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983. 108 pp., hardbound \$16, paper \$6.95.

Reviewed by Karen D. Vitelli

The University of Chicago Press' publication of Paul M. Bator's essay, which first appeared in the *Stanford Law Review* [34 [1982]: 275-384], now makes readily available this excellent and balanced discussion and evaluation of the international trade in art.

Bator is certainly qualified to write authoritatively on this subject. He is the Bromley Professor of Law at the Harvard Law School, currently deputy solicitor general of the United States and in 1970 was a member of the U.S. delegation to the UNESCO Special Committee in Paris that drafted the Convention on Cultural Property. Thereafter he played a crucial role in the negotiation and drafting of our own Cultural Property Implementation Act, PL 97446. This essay, which is in part a plea for passage of that legislation, went to press shortly

before the act was finally passed and signed into law.

A lot of territory is covered in these few pages. Early on, there are some moving passages on the importance of art to a civilized life, both our own national art and that of other nations and cultures. For purposes of this discussion Bator defines art as "all objects that are in fact prized and collected" (p. 9) and begins his essay with reference to Clemency Coggins' "Illicit Traffic of Pre-Columbian Antiquities" in the *Art Journal* (29 [1969]: 94-98, 114), citing its publication as a turning point in our awareness of the problems created by the international traffic in art.

Bator is well informed, sensitive to the concerns and fair in his criticisms of all the special interest groups touched by this issue. His is a balanced look at the larger picture, which makes this an important essay for the specialist to digest.

The most common means of regulating the international trade in art is the export embargo. Most countries — the United States is one of only six or seven exceptions worldwide (p. 38) — limit the export of cultural materials to some extent. Bator reviews the different kinds of limitations and comes down hard on those nations — most, in fact, of the so-called art-rich nations — that place what amounts to a total ban on the export of all cultural material (usually excepting "recent" art). Rather than total embargo, Bator suggests it is far more effective to limit export bans to relatively few national treasures, to concentrate meaningful security measures on those pieces and to allow the rest to circulate.

Less familiar, and more difficult to understand, are the legal implications and consequences of the wording of export embargoes. If, for example, the exporting country's statute simply declares that "cultural material may not be exported without permission from our authorities," and a bona fide owner successfully takes an object out of that country (i.e., exports it illegally), he may then import that object to the United States (or most other major importing countries), make a normal U.S. customs declaration and exhibit it, sell it or give it away quite legally. If, on the other hand, the exporting country's statute declares explicitly that the *state* is the owner of all cultural material, and forbids export without permission, then, under the ruling handed down in the

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McClain case in 1979 (see pp. 70-78 for details and extensive references) the United States recognizes the fact of export without a permit as an act of *theft*. If the object is then imported into the United States, the importer may be prosecuted under our National Stolen Property Act for engaging in traffic in stolen goods.

The rightness of these current legal interpretations has been, and no doubt will continue to be, hotly debated by all interested parties. The *McClain* decision has not yet been tested. If the courts do accept it in future cases, "those who export antiquities illegally and seek to bring them to the United States will have a significantly greater exposure to liability. Further, the protection afforded to dealers, collectors, and museums... will have been significantly narrowed" (p. 77). Archeologists have tended to applaud *McClain* as providing legal deterrent to the destruction of archeological sites by reducing U.S. market demand. Bator, looking at the larger picture, disagrees. His reasons involve the problem of committing the United States to enforce another country's laws that may disagree with our own policy — in this case that most art should circulate — as well as our traditional understanding of what constitutes ownership, and therefore theft. Certainly the next case to use *McClain* will be most interesting and important, especially since the Cultural Property Implementation Act has been passed in the interim and seems to reflect Bator's view rather than that expressed in *McClain*.

Bator's thoughts on museum policies are most admirable. He argues that museums, through self-regulation, should refrain from acquiring illegally exported art and that they should disclose *all* information about what they do acquire. "The entire atmosphere of 'no questions asked, no information given' surrounding the art trade is antithetical to the obligation of museums to aid the study and understanding of art, an obligation which requires an aggressive search for and a full disclosure of information about the origins and history of a work of art" (p. 84). One hopes that these pages (especially pp. 80-87) will be read thoughtfully by every museum curator, registrar and director in the country.

A final appendix gives fascinating insights into the chaotic process and product of the 1970 Paris UNESCO

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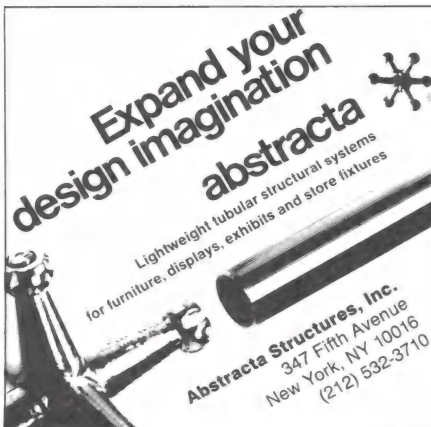
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meeting. The essay and its extensive references provide an excellent point of departure for discussion of the many complex issues and values involved in the international trade in art. I am grateful to Bator for assembling these materials and provocative thoughts and sharing them with what deserves to be a very extensive audience.

Museum Public Relations

G. Donald Adams. AASLH Management Series, Volume 2. Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, 1983. 300 pp., clothbound \$21, \$18.90 for AASLH members.

Reviewed by Rosalyn Ridgway

In the preface to his book on public relations, Don Adams states, "During my several years in higher education as a one-person public relations department, I could often have used a reference book that addressed my specific needs." He adds that after he moved to an office in a museum, he met many individuals who were working alone, part time, and with no special training in public relations. To bridge what he considered a real information gap, Adams set about writing this book. He addresses veteran publicists as well as beginners and attempts to speak to museums both large and small.

Clearly half of *Museum Public Relations* falls into the category of a how-to-do-it volume; a well-organized, very detailed, step-by-step walk through the publications program, working with the media, the promotional campaign and the daily operations of a museum public relations department. Beginners in museum public relations or those with little or no professional training will be encouraged by using this book as a

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handy reference. For the veteran professional, the segments dealing with advanced concepts supported by larger budgets and staff will prove enlightening.

While the author's use of the term publicist should be challenged on the basis that it too narrowly defines the public relations profession, the Adams work should find a place on every museum bookshelf. Although public relations skills can be extrapolated from any good basic reference, it is extremely useful to have a guide through *museum* public relations. Almost no literature is available that deals with the specific issues of museum public relations, such as broadening audience base while maintaining the educational and esthetic character of a museum, developing broad-based financial support, making the most of limited financial and human resources and working with volunteers.

This void is keenly felt at a time when the importance of museum public relations continues to grow. The AAM's Commission on Museums for a New Century has noted that increased emphasis and sophistication on the part of museum directors and trustees toward the publics they serve will be needed in the future. And Thomas W. Leavitt, AAM president and a member of the commission, believes that public relations is one of the most important questions confronting museums today. "How are museums viewed by the public?" he asks. "Are those views in accord with our images of ourselves?"

Other data also point to the increasing role of museum public relations. Adams is by no means alone in asserting that museums need a more thorough understanding of programs, collections and the publics they serve. He stresses in his book that museums will also need to develop a mechanism for continuous recording and evaluation of public opinion, a policy-forming procedure that considers public reactions and the museum's needs, balancing the two interests within the framework of professional standards, goals and objectives. Museums will need to formulate a plan that defines needs, sets goals and provides for evaluation of performance.

Adams suggests that museums must have a purposeful communication program that uses the most appropriate media to reach specific publics and a long-range view that permits the in-

stitution to anticipate opportunities and problems and to deal with them effectively. Clearly, Adams describes a much larger role for the museum public relations professional of the future.

Communication, Adams believes, should be regarded as the primary task of the public relations staff, and all communication should be consistent with a written statement of the museum's mission or purpose. His discussion of the dynamic, ongoing communication process serves to enlighten the museum beginner and to crystallize the professional's thoughts.

In the chapter devoted to preparing for public relations, Adams discusses the qualifications and skills needed to carry out the communications function in a museum. He includes trustee and advisory committees, the part-time and full-time specialist, criteria for evaluating an outside consulting firm and the special internal relations with curators and educational professionals. While developing a public relations budget may strike terror in the hearts of many, Adams sets up some useful guidelines for developing a realistic and defensible budget.

Critical to the success of any public relations program is the thoughtful research and planning process. Indeed, one may chart success—or something less—in direct relation to the amount of planning and research that has preceded implementation of a program. Adams suggests that research should start with a public audit and leads the reader through this process. He then moves on to the feedback mechanisms that should be in place in all museums, regardless of size, so that public opinion may be adequately evaluated.

There is a good but altogether too brief section on developing goals and objectives, long-range planning, strategic planning and issues management. If museum public relations is ever to move out of the task-oriented mode, more emphasis needs to be placed on research and planning. It is hoped that future publications will cover these topics in greater depth in anticipation of the emerging role of museums over the next two decades.

An additional chapter discusses external publics and summarizes their role in the successful fulfillment of a museum's mission. Other sections detail the need to develop effective communication with visitors, employees,

the speakers' bureau, volunteers and the community.

While fund raising is primarily the responsibility of a museum's development office, it is the public relations effort that must create a climate in which prospective donors are made aware of and have positive feelings toward museums. Adams outlines the fund-raising climate for museums in the aftermath of federal budget cutbacks in allocations to the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities. Coupled with escalating inflation and increased endowment and program needs, museums have been further cast into an unfavorable economic environment. Most museum officials will agree with pioneer fund-raising consultant John Price Jones that fully 50 percent of all the time and effort in the average fund-raising enterprise is in the field of public relations. Working from the public relations perspective, Adams touches on developing museum memberships, the annual and capital proposals, special gifts and deferred giving and government relations.

The last five chapters are replete with how-to-do-it tips stripped down to the

basics of a workbook. Adams takes the reader through the publications details of paper sizes and type faces, how to crop photographs and choose artwork. He even has some good suggestions for storage and distribution.

Subsequent chapters on working with the media, how to write a news release, the promotional campaign and the day-by-day practice in a public relations office receive equally detailed attention. While beginners will no doubt find this programmed description of technique useful, it will not be particularly helpful to the more seasoned professional. A limited, though organized and thoughtful, appendix lists sources of further information, including directories, periodicals and professional associations.

Museum Public Relations, the second volume in the management series published by the American Association for State and Local History, is timely, well-written and useful. It is regretted, though understandable because of the variety of material to be covered, that Adams did not devote more space to some of the topics, particularly research and planning. Δ

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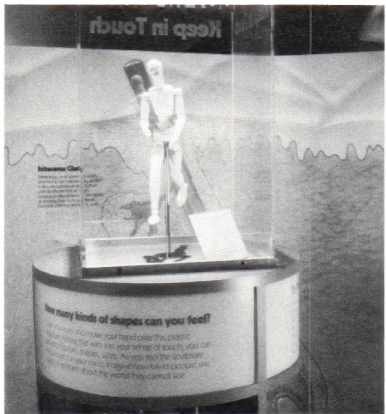
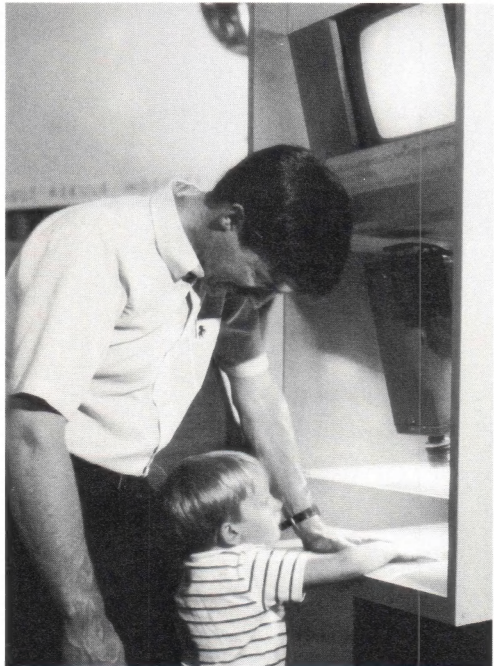
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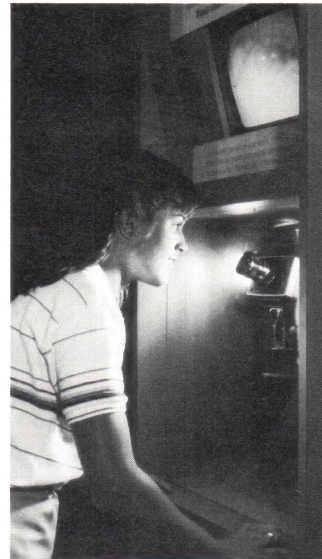
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